

# The Terran Incident

by Chris000

Category: Halo, Sonic the Hedgehog

Genre: Adventure, Sci-Fi

Language: English

Status: Completed

Published: 2006-09-22 03:34:03

Updated: 2006-12-07 02:12:44

Packaged: 2016-04-27 03:02:51

Rating: T

Chapters: 20

Words: 34,619

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: With Dr. Eggman on the run, and after the UNSC's victory at Robotropolis, another race prepares to attack Earth. Unbelievably, they are humans. they are the Terrans.

## 1. Chapter 1

### The Terran Incident

By Chris000

Soldier's Log:

Captain Christopher Vennettilli journal

August 31st 3235 (Military Calendar)

UNSC \_Indomitable\_ crew bunk Victor Kilo 3

/begin log:

It's been two months since the events of Robotropolis. Eggman's still on the run in this dimension and I fear that he's in ours too. Although we have some evidence that there's a command post located on New Mars, the only other Mobian settlement in the quadrant, and speaking of which, there'll be a UNSC funded project that'll expand the distance of owned space in this universe and we may reach contact with another race, I just hope they aren't like the Covenant and look how well that turned out! Back on subject though. Andsworth has been in contact with HIGHCOM back in Sydney. I think that with the way things are going: We'll catch him before Christmas. Not only is morale going up in the war effort, we managed to snag Shadow the Hedgehog from the dark side's grip, to quote the old Star wars series! Now, this journal is very important because, I think someone's watching us, and I don't mean just us, I think they've known about us for a looooooonnnng time. But then people would say I think too much (as if I don't already and proud of it!).

/end entry/

Captain Chris Vennettilli sat on his bunk reading an ancient recreation of the book War and Peace. It was a wonderful militaristic novel. Apparently, it had been very popular in the 20th century and people still found it impressive! Chris had many things to be proud of, he was one of the heroes of Robotropolis, he was one of the youngest rank progressions in the millennium. The young man was 21 and was at a full captain rank. He was the first man to discover the Mobian race after being lost for centuries. He also was part of ONI, which was the Office of Naval Intelligence, which was unusual because he was a marine, but command had its reasons. Chris wasn't alone on this planet. He had the best friends anyone could ask for. Ryan Percy, the greatest arms dealer in the Orion Arm, Stuart Labute, Stuart was a businessman who owned the Inner Sphere wide known company, OmniTek which supplied much of the UNSC's weaponry, Carl Santorini, his favorite sniper, Lance McGregor, the Irish support man who was a certified madman with his M249 SAW. Chaz Sullivan who could blow up a tank before the pilot even thought to fire the cannons. The Freedom Fighters, which were Mobians Chris had met his first year on the planet, Sonic the hedgehog as their leader. Sonic was slightly younger than Chris, making him more naïve than him. That, he didn't approve of. If Chris had the chance, He'd hammer out those stops. Tails, or Miles Prower, was the gang's head techie. He was a virtual whiz at any mechanical device, Maybe it helped to have an IQ of over 300. Knuckles the Echidna was the most toughest person he had ever met, harder than Titanium A battleplate and twice as mean. Amy Rose was also a hedgehog who loved Sonic so much. She's a lover not a fighter and loves to shop. Sally Acorn was the Princess of Mobius, If her parents, the King and Queen weren't available, she's assume political control. And, as a side-note, Chris liked her. It wasn't something that he'd freely exclaim. Only him and Sonic knew about that and he wanted to keep it that way.

Chris was about halfway done the book by this time. War and Peace truly was a fascinating book. It was based in Napoleonic wars back in the 1500s. Chris had seen Napoleon's many battles on the history vids in school. There were only 3 other men in the room. Carl, Lance and Knuckles. Chaz was on duty somewhere else. The three were playing a game of Texas Hold 'em. "Ha ha, boys, that's three for me!" Knuckles called out, tossing his cards to the floor where two hundred dollars and a M7 SMG lay. Apparently they were heavy betters. Carl snarled throwing down his hand, not a card matched. "I hate you." He said sourly. Lance never said a word. He only lost by a pair. "I know you do." Knuckles giggled as he scooped up his winnings. Chris laughed. It was too quiet to be heard. The day carried on. It was had to tell what time it was in space so the clocks were set to Mercia time; Mobius's Greenwich. It was 6:24 at night when Chris surrendered to drowsiness and began to slump. His ribs ached. After a fall like that off the spire, he was surprised he survived. Then, he closed his eyes and rested his head on the pillow. He heard Carl's voice scream "Rematch!" Then he heard nothing.

On the bridge of the ship, Admiral Gerome Andsworth sat in his command chair, stroking his black moustache looking through the Plexiglas windows and the space that loomed beyond for eternity. Something felt wrong, but what was it? Gerome felt that something was approaching, but he couldn't place the fact. Whenever his gut told him he was close to something, he knew. And now, it was pounding like

crazy. Lieutenant Jaffa said, "Sir, transmission from HIGHCOM, sir." Andsworth nodded. "Let me hear it." Jaffa punched in some keys and a picture of a man appeared on the screen, Admiral Hugh Redby. "Hubert! How goes?" Andsworth said with a smile. Redby was smiling, but not whole-heartedly. "Not so good now that you mention it." Andsworth frowned. "It's not Eggman is it?" "No, no. Eggman's still on the run but it seems that it's something bigger, worse."

Andsworth sat up straight, his gut aching. "What do you mean worse Hugh?"

## 2. Chapter 2 Freedom Fighters

### Chapter 2: Introduction: Freedom Fighters

August 31st 3235 0000 h (Mobian Calendar)

Castle Acorn, Mobius

This is Sonic the Hedgehog. Sonic is the world's fastest supersonic hedgehog. Up until a little while ago, he knew he wasn't the only one. Shadow the Hedgehog was the only one that could match Sonic's speed. Sonic was 17 years old at the time. Drafted into the military a short time ago, he had no choice but to battle Eggman with a gun and grenades.

Sonic still liked to use a Homing attack on any enemy who opposed him. But having a gun had its perks, you could kill an enemy from 1000 meters away before even coming close to one on foot. Sonic was at the rank of Corporal in the military. He was an insubordinate soldier and broke rules sometimes. But still, he was a good person. Sonic was at Castle Acorn at 12 o' clock in the morning just doing nothing in particular. Sonic had a home to go to but he went home on some rare occasion. The war was preventing everything from happening

This is Miles "Tails" Prower. The only 2 tailed fox on the team, hence the name "Tails" became an appropriate title. Tails almost never saw war action. On some small occasion he went on an escort mission which had to transport munitions and carried a X38 OmniTek stun rifle. Tails was the smartest of the team and put together his own 'Mech from scratch. Although, the Tornado couldn't compete with the human Atlas Assault class 'Mech, though.

This is Amy Rose. If you looked up shopping psychopath in the dictionary (and you probably won't find it) You'd see Amy's picture. Amy was a 15-year-old pink hedgehog who loved Sonic more than life. She even made a shrine in his honor. The relics ranging from his favorite running shoe stuffing to his favorite chili dog brand can. There was nothing stopping this one from marrying Sonic, even if she had to take the world down to do it.

This is Sally Acorn, Her royal highness of the planet Mobius. Sally was 17 and the princess of Mobius. Sally's parents were the king and queen of Mobius. Only recently did humans come in contact. Almost 14 months ago. Sally had political control of the senate if her parents were unable to show or if they died. However, If Prince Elias Acorn ever returned, he would get the throne. Sally was a Sergeant in the UNSC military and rose through the ranks due to her royal background

and excelled as a natural leader. She had an affection for her friend, Chris who was a UNSC marine as well. Twice had he risked his life protecting something that Mobius held dear: The Chaos Emeralds, and Mobius's freedom as well. Sonic on the other hand, had monuments erected in his honor and was a gentleman. Chris may be rugged and random, but had never resisted helping out another needy citizen, He had once given his last few dollars to needy children who wanted the money to fix their orphanage. \_On a side note\_, she thought, \_ I'll have to look into that matter\_. Besides the fact, none of this really mattered. She wasn't expecting to like either of them, she was just affectionate, as she was for everyone else in her kingdom.

Sonic was lying down on his bed in the castle. He always admired how soft they were. He was thinking about Knuckles on the human ship, the \_Indomitable\_, where he was serving at the moment. Sonic snickered. He never liked space travel, it was always too quiet and cold. Sonic preferred a warm climate. And since Knothole Kingdom was close to the equator, he'd get that warm climate he asked for. Now, he needed some sleep, bad.

His head hit the pillow and he drifted off.

### 3. Chapter 3 Shore Leave Finished

#### Chapter 3: Shore Leave Finished

September 1st 3235 0200 h (Military Calendar)

UNSC \_Indomitable\_

En route to Mobius/Earth Jumpgate.

Chris awoke to the long absent rumble of the \_Indomitable\_'s engines. They hadn't been run for months. The system seemed likely to break down when the ship couldn't use her engines. A damn shame when it was the most powerful in the human fleet. "Hey we're moving." Knuckles whispered. And he was right. Outside, Chris could see that the planet of Mobius was moving slowly away. The golden light of her sun revealing that the Floating Island cast a shadow on Downunda. "What's going on?" Chris yawned. He only got two hours of sleep. Might've been half a second. Who knew? Chaz was back from his shift with Sergeant Johnson, the second in command of the squad and the oldest marine there. Actually, when cryo sleep was initiated, you were in suspended animation, doing so, the sergeant would retain his age through the process. Thus said, he was over 600 years old. "Hey boss, you're awake." He said seeing Chris rise from the bunk. "Yeah it doesn't look good. Maybe the admiral had something to do with this. "I'll find out what's going on." Chris said moving to the intercom. "Get me the bridge." He spoke. One second later, there was a beep and Lieutenant Feedin came up. "Bridge here, Chris. What do you need?" Chris said. "Hey Feedin, can you hook me up with the admiral? I just need to ask a question." Feedin agreed then Andsworth's gruff Texan accent spoke up. "Need something, son?" "Yes, sir. I just want to know what's going on?" Andsworth chuckled. "You're not the first and by God you won't be the last. I just got off the horn with Captain Kanow and Major Everly wondering about what's going on too. Well, short and sweet: We've been called back to Earth by the higher brass, The Presidents of the UN, I mean. We may have a situation on our hands, son. At approximately 1040 August 30th we found evidence of a

\_3rd \_alien race lurking out there somewhere." Chris swallowed, so did his men. Another race? This could be bad. " We need to go to HIGHCOM and receive briefing. Based on photos by the Darwin Space Telescope over Proxima Centauri, there seems to be an alien ship somewhere about 20 parsecs away, looks human, but we have been wrong before you know. I bet that answers your question, son." Chris nodded and said, "yes sir. Thank you. It does." Before shutting off the COM. He turned to his teammates. "Alright men, we have another race of aliens out there and they seem to be as bad and/or worse than the covenant. That \_is not\_ good so we have to go to Australia and get what info we can and make sure that there isn't disasters like last time."

Outside, the ship kept accelerating right toward the Mobius/Earth jumpgate. Actually, the humans have come to Mobius by mistake. They were fleeing from the Covenant when they encountered a Sol emerald in Thyris II, an icy planet beyond the Inner Colonies. When they stopped their jump, they had emerged at Mobius and met the anthropomorphic people, which had been lost for so long. Now. They were going home again.

Down on the planet's surface the Mobians stopped their night life and gazed at the \_Indomitable\_ which was surprisingly, not hard to spot in the night sky, almost as shiny as a star itself and twice as large as the moon as it seemed. Now, it was going away. Towards the Now completed jumpgate which was used as a portal to transport things from the Earth dimension to Mobius's dimension. At the castle, Sonic watched the ship disappear. Sally beside him. "Where are they going?" he asked as the ship's fusion engines glowed white blue accelerating away from the gravity well. "I'm not sure, Sonic but it seems that they're going back to Earth." Sally said. "Knuckles was there with them. I guess he's going too." Knuckles was a long time friend of Sonic. "But more importantly," Sally said. "When are they getting back?" Sonic sighed. Normally he didn't care much for anyone but himself but after recent events, he felt compassionate towards the humans and what they had done for the Mobians. "I'm not sure, princess. But something, somewhere tells me that something, terrible is going to happen." He went back inside leaving a startled princess Sally looking at the retreating ship. Watching it disappear. Weather it was for a day, or a month, they'd come back.

#### 4. Chapter 4 Sydney

##### Chapter 4: Sydney

September 1st 3235 1120 h (Military Calendar)

Sydney, Australia HIGHCOM base

Andsworth led the parade into HIGHCOM's administration sector. By his sides were his most trusted officers. Chris on his left and Lieutenant Colonel Nicholas Tchykevsky on his right. Most of the brass on the \_Indomitable\_ were either colonels, field marshals or captains. Tchykevsky was from a militaristic Russian family and was 43 years old. His skill with small arms and rifles made him a very competitive soldier. Chris had read the lieutenant colonel's CSV and was impressed with him. He was sure Tchykevsky read his too. "So, sir, tell us of what will happen again?" he said in a light Russian accent. Andsworth said, "Well, from what I heard from Admiral Redby,

we're to report here because they have something important to tell us. If things go wrong, at least we'll warn everyone we can." Chris nodded in agreement. "That's good sir. But, what if they don't know what they're dealing with?" Andsworth sighed. "Well then, Captain I don't know what to do." The secretary looked up to see them walking toward them. She smiled and said, "They're waiting for you downstairs." Andsworth smiled back and nodded in thanks, and motioned his men toward the elevators. The elevator was a long hall, which descended kilometers into the ground. On the wall sat many famous painting. Some such as \_Washington crossing the Delaware\_, various alien landscapes and space battles lined the wall. The base had many layers of steel, Titanium A and EMP hardened metal, but hey. Reach had all that and looked what happened over there! They had traveled 5 kilometers into the earth and didn't even notice it. A computer slid out of the wall. Standard ID system. Chris placed his hand on the pad. He felt a sharp jab as the needle sampled his skin. He winced as the blood pinpricked. He then placed his eyes in front of a rental scanner. That was green. He then imputed on a keypad: Vennettilli, Christopher. Captain 01779-97907-CV. The computer beeped in response as it accepted the ID and slid back. The elevator had stopped and none of them knew it until the computer announced that they were at the briefing/debriefing level. The three men walked to swinging doors. Two marine MPs stood to salute. They pushed open the doors and stepped inside.

The entire room was filled with ONI brass and marine commanding generals. At the head of marines were General Kits IV and Admiral Hugh Redby at the Navy's driver seat. Redby saw them entering. He stood and smiled. "Gerry, good to see you!" He shook Andsworth's hand. "How're things at Mobius?" he asked. He had all the right. The UNSC had sacrificed a fifth of their fleet defending the planet. And with the war recovery in progressâ€¦ "Things are great." Andsworth said back smiling. Redby noticed Chris and Nicholas. "Sir!" Chris said and saluted. Redby smiled. Chris's salutes were always sharp as a blade. "At ease, Captain. I never personally got to congratulate you in Robotropolis two months back." Chris smiled, but the Admiral couldn't see the regret behind the features. They had sacrificed so much. Jimmy and Johnny, the ecstatic twins had died fighting. "Lieutenant Colonel." Redby said looking at Tchykevsky. "Sir." Nicholas said saluting. "At ease soldier." Well, have a seat gentleman. As soon as they took their seats, the lights dimmed and Kits stepped out onto the stage of the room. An overhead screen came down. And there was a star field on the screen. Most likely one of the \_Archimedes\_ sensor station's reports. "Gentlemen, I thank you all for coming. 2 months ago we detected an object on the outskirts of the Free World Alliance space. We couldn't get a direct picture but this was the best we got." There was a magnified image on the screen that was blown up so that the pixels were visible. There appeared to be a sleek ship much like the blue-platinum in the Mobian design but much different in hull shape. The Mobians were sleek. This one seemed to have many protruding sections. "This ship doesn't match any dropship or jumpship designs that we have and no design seems to be even thought of. "It has come to my conclusion that the design is alien to us but it is indeed human in intentional design. The ship is extremely dangerous and is not to be approached except by large warships. Assuming that the raceâ€¦" Chris wasn't listening to what Kits had to say. An alien race that was human? The design didn't match any ship in the Inner Sphere and defiantly wasn't a civilian pleasure craft. So what was it? Could it be humans from beyond the Inner Sphere? Could Alecsander Kerensky, the founder of the Clans,

landed on another planet but kept it hush-hush? And did the Second Commonwealth, Mainly the Mobians, know about this? Could the aliens have some sort of Universe Traversing device that could break through universal barriers that separated the humans from the Freedom fighters? All this could be disastrous. So the moment they got back, they'd tell.

## 5. Chapter 5 Terrans

### Chapter 5: Terrans

September 7th 3235 2020 h (Military Calendar)

Mobius, en route to Orbital Post Gamma

Chris looked out of his quarters windows. Knuckles looked at the orb below them that was Mobius. "Man, that was no fun." Chris scoffed. "Wasn't supposed to be frolicking through the flowers now." He said playfully. Knuckles rolled his eyes. Carl, Chaz, and Lance were asleep. Sarge had to go to the smoking area of the ship. The new safety regulation had a habit of sucking up the cigar whenever it was loose in the sergeant's mouth and ejecting it into space. "When I joined the Corps, we didn't have any fancy shmanzy smoking regulations we could do anything we wanted dang it!" Orbital Post Gamma was where the Indomitable was always stationed. Her own gravitational forces moored her. It took two destroyers to tug boat the supercarrier to its place. A shuttle was soon connected and Chris was sent down. The sweet Mobian air flooded into the passenger compartment and he stepped onto the baking pavement of the Mobian International Airport. His first stop was at the Palace Mech Bay. Inside was the scurrying of technicians bolting, reloading and cooling gigantic war robots. His slot was in Binary 12 Alpha "Hellrider" Lance 1. His head techs included Larry Jome and Gerry Vomos.

Both humans. "Morning, Larr, Gerr." They turned and smiled at their boss. "Hey Cap'n the princess said you were going to Earth. I guess we heard right." Larry said. Chris looked up at his favorite Mech, the Vulture. The Vulture was a heavy "Chicken Walker" 'Mech that towered at 50 feet high. It was very recognizable for its big nose that housed sensor equipment. "How's she doing?" He asked, admiring the equipment. "Reactor's hot and ready to go when ready." Gerry reported happily. He pulled a welding mask over his face and worked on the leg via a cherry picker. "The leg sprung a coolant leak 2 days ago and I patched that up. She should be safe now. Just let me finish it up. I'll get another battle plate ready just in case she leaks again." Jerry cleared his throat and announced: "Got those PPCs installed for you. I tell ya boss that a 'Mech like this wasn't designed to take a Particle Projectile Cannon. But what the hay, there's a first time for everything" Chris smiled. He loved it when things went right. "And the LRMs?" Gerry nodded and shouted through his welding mask, "all accounted for. One guy almost blew himself up handling one too. Idiot." "So," Chris said. "Everything's in check?" Jerry nodded again. "Yes sir, bossman." "OK, just run a few tests and bring her out for a test run." The two techs hammered away at the 'mech while Chris walked toward the exit to the castle courtyard.

The entrance to the castle was huge. It was big enough to fit a

medium size Mech in as well as a few Scorpion tanks. The entrance hall was comprised of pillars made of marble and had guards standing in between each. Many with the faces of Chipmunks, German Sheppards, or even Rabbits, standing guard. Up ahead, the thrones were empty. The king and queen must be about somewhere. But the room wasn't empty. A hedgehog casually lounged on one on the chairs, snoring loudly. Amazing how he didn't wake the guards from their 'jobs'. The guards were actually sleeping standing up. Something all of them 'forgot' to include in their resume. Sonic seemed to be muttering in his sleep. Chris turned on his mission recorder. Audio only. The opportunity was too juicy to miss.

"Hey, Amy," Sonic muttered unconsciously. "Have you ever went on a date with a guy who could run faster than you can think?" Chris was discusted. Not a great pickup line. "No, Silly." Chris said in a girly voice. It wasn't Academy Award quality, but it seemed to be taking effect quite nicely He'd bet that the sleeping Sonic couldn't tell the difference. "Now, Sonic, dearest. What do you think of me?" Chris asked. "Amy," Sonic said drowsily, "I think you're hotter than a gun's barrel after you blasted off a full load" Sonic began to say things he wouldn't say awake or even alive for that matter. He would hate him after he woke up and found out. The boys in the office would be splitting seams for weeks. And Amy. Oh boy would that be a sight to see, Sonic confessing his true feelings about her. Then he left satisfied, going for the keep.

"Hey Chris how was Earth? Called Tails, the two tailed fox. "Earth was OK, I guess. We may have a situation." Tails looked confused. " A situation? We haven't had a situation for two months." Chris expected him to say this. Chris was a hardened soldier from the Second Rainforest war in Brazil. He knew that an enemy could come at any time, weather it was a day, a week or even a year. Chris then said, "In the meantime, I recommend you go back to the Mech bay and make sure all of those things are ready in case of an emergency." Tails nodded and set off. He kept walking then.

The palace was very old. They still had conventional stairs in some places people thought were 'to special to modernize.' Once at the top. He asked for permission from a guard. Security needed to be toughed up since the war. The guard was a Kodiak and had an extreme dislike for humans. But, however, if one human went down, five more would follow. So, he allowed access. The room was refurbished. No longer looking like a castle keep, but more like a modern teenager's room. Flashy wallpaper in some places but around the balcony, there was still ancient stone. Chris liked that. That part shouldn't change because that would create dramatics. The princess was sitting at a table, brushing her hair. She had long, longer than shoulder length hair that was usually left that way. She didn't seem to notice him. Chris then stepped very quietly. Something he learned in SpecOps. Careful steps muffled the footfalls. However he overlooked one thing: Squirrels had very keen senses of hearing.

A shining blue boot came up quicker than Chris could register it. It connected with his face. He could've sworn he lost a tooth. The second time it came around. He caught it, twisted it around, and looked at it'd owner, Princess Sally Acorn. "Good kick." Chris said through his lost tooth. "Nice block. Sally said, smiling. They both hugged each other. "You've been away for a while." Chris shrugged. "Yeah, the brass had to make an announcement." Sally sat down on the chair. "What kind of announcement?" She asked. Chris told her about



the unidentified ship. "It already hit 2 House Liao planets on the way here and rumor has it that they're heading for Earth. Sally said. "That could be trouble, then. " "Yeah, you have that right." Chris sighed. "Earth is still recovering from the war. If another enemy force attacks us, we won't stand a chance." Sally smiled and soothingly said. "Well, don't bet the farm until you see the odds." Chris was confused. "What does that mean?" Sally laughed. "It means that you shouldn't say that these 'aliens' are as deadly as they seem until you actually see them in action." She was right. The UNSC couldn't think that this race was almighty powerful until they played a little game of skirmish. "It's nice to see you back again, by the way." Sally said. "Yeah, I know." Chris answered. "Its good to be back, too." Chris and Sally said good night and he left to get some sleep.

UNSC Picket Destroyer \_Paraclytes\_

Outside of New Michigan colony

The Destroyer was a sleepy one. She never saw much action and to top things off, they were stuck on patrol on the hind end of the Inner Sphere. They could be doing more important things like fighting the Covenant or stopping a Successor State from destroying one another. But today was different. Captain Dallas was the CO aboard the ship. A hostile craft was coming ahead. Dallas ordered all hands to make the MAC cannon ready for launch. The proximity alarm blared at 1000 kilometers. The destroyer's MAC gun spat out a red-hot slug that screamed off into space. The round impacted on the hull, but blew up harmlessly against the ship. "A shield!" Dallas screamed. It was too late now. The ship's canons were fully charged and there was no stopping it now. All the ship's recorder was able to do was catch the final moments. On the alien ship's hull, printed in plain Standard was TERRAN CONFEDERACY. It only took a single deadly laser blast to transform the \_Pataclytes\_ into a nuclear fireball.

## 6. Chapter 6 The First Encounter

Chapter 6: The First Encounter with Dangerous Kinds

September 10th 3235 0930 (Military Calendar)

UNSC \_Indomitable\_

Chris had boarded the Indomitable aboard the UNSC Union Class Dropship, The \_Dedalus\_. The supercarrier could hold 12 Union Class dropping vessels on it's many Universal Adaptor docking rings. Each dropship carried 10 Mechs or a Binary as the UNSC called it. 5 'Mechs to a lance. The transfer was made and Chris entered the Ship's main cargo hold. Inside, 100 UNSC Pelican dropships were nestled in their perches, waiting to be flown. 'Mechs were pounding back and forth on the testing grounds in the middle of the hold. Technicians scrambled over each metal behemoth's structure. Chris walked over to Section "A" moor 1. His Vulture stood waiting, as it always had. Larry and Gerry were sitting on a couch just beside the 'Mech watching TV on a small color screen. They appeared to be watching baseball, an Earth sport, very famous in the galaxy. Chris walked over, and then said, "So, what's the score?" Larry and Gerry both looked at him in surprise, wondering if he'd penalize them for watching the tube on duty. "Solaris VII versus Huntress. Solaris ahead by 15 runs." Gerry

said surprised. Chris scowled at the Huntress players. "They'd better pick up their game, they've been behind ever since Smoke Jaguar has been wiped out and that's a long time my friends." The techs chuckled, relieved that they'd live to breathe the Carbon Monoxide of the Motor pool for another day

Binary 12's Alpha lance comprised of 5 'Mechs. A Vulture, two Mad Cats and a Puma. Chris was in the Vulture. A Marine being a Mechwarrior was a strange thing, yet over 150 Pilots were Marines as well. Although, ground combat was what Chris was trained for, so he spent less time in the air conditioned cockpit listening to Classical music while vaporizing aliens and more time on the open, hot ground listening to exploding plasma mortars while hoping that he wouldn't be vaporized by aliens. Chris was at the 'Mechs legs when Johnson came around. "You know, boy, I'm glad I'm not a Mechwarrior." Chris was skeptical. Almost every man and woman in the Corps wanted to be a Mechwarrior. "Why so, Sarge?" Johnson shrugged. "I dunno. I mean, doesn't it get sort of claustrophobic in that little cockpit?" Oh, he knew this one. Johnson did want to be a Mechwarrior, he just wanted someone out of the way so a seat was empty. Waiting for someone to sit in it. Anything could be arranged nowadays. "From what I heard, you seemed pretty cool when you were screaming at supersonic speeds toward Halo in a tight, squeezed lifeboat with 16 other men with you." Johnson's shoulders sagged. "OK, what about plasma?" Scared it might crisp you? Would high tail it if I was you." Chris laughed. "Been dodging Covenant plasma for over 15 years and you're scared?"

"Those metallic feet?" Johnson suggested. "That giant of a Brute, Tartarus's Hammer of Rhukt?" Johnson was shaking. "I need a cigar!" He reached into his pocket to pull one out, then, alarms blared. "SERGEANT AVERY JOHNSON, THIS IS A CODE 42; ILLIGAL COMBUSTABLE OBJECT HAS BEEN LOCATED IN YOUR VACINITY. OUR SYSTEM WILL REMOVE OBJECT FOR YOU. THANK YOU." A tube snaked down from the high-above ceiling and snatched the cigar away, vacuuming it away from the ship. "DAMNIT!" Johnson yelled stamping the floor.

Andsworth sat in the command char in the middle of the Indomitable's bridge. Twice in a month he had to leave the security of Mobius to get back to The EarthVerse as the UNSC called it nowadays. Andsworth directed to the Lieutenants to set the engines to 135. Slightly more than recommended for a ship of the Indomitable's tonnage, but none of the crew was going to lose any sleep over it. The supercarrier was guided by a Mobian destroyer out of the mooring zone, then with clearance from the control tower, she hummed toward the jumpgate leading to earth.

The jumpgate stood a massive 5 kilometers in radius. She was in gyosynchronized orbit with the moon. The jumpgates here were actually fairly recent. With the first defeat of Eggman with the human's help, the UNSC here ordered the building of a second gate in perfect alignment with the jump co-ordinates the humans used to get here. The gate was powered by a Chaos Emerald, which gave it the power to rip a hole in the cloth that kept the universes apart by merely going into Slipspace. With the addition that the inner realm of Slipspace being white as a cloud, the ship went so fast that it passed through space and time. The Indomitable edged closer, and closer, and then, she was swallowed by a flash of light that pulsed from stem to stern.

The Indomitable leaving her second home system was big news indeed. News centers in Knothole Kingdom, Station Square, Downunda, and Mercia have reported the strange and sudden disappearances, arguing that the reasons are currently classified, but many of the Mobians started to spread rumors that the humans didn't care for them much anymore, this affected few but many still remained faithful of the humans. Despite rumors, the truth would be far from glorious

## 7. Chapter 7 CONTACT

Chapter 7: The First Encounter September 12th 3235 1123 h Entering Alpha Centauri system Captain Chris Vennettilli Log 82.5 /Begin Log/Morinin' journal. Its 11:23 in the morning on a beautiful Tuesday. Its freezing cold outside so pack a suit, a space suit that is. Man, I need some new jokes. Anyway, we're just outside of Alpha Centauri II, the planet I did basic training on. For anyone reading this who doesn't know, Alpha Centauri II is a planet covered 57 by water. It has three huge continents due to the terraforming in 2227. It's the average temperature is about 28 degrees since its closer to its sun. Alpha Centauri I is a hot Jupiter, meaning that it has hotter gasses in the atmosphere since it's the closest planet. Alpha Centauri III is an icy planet 5 Astronomical Units (AU) away, meaning that its freaking cold. We'll be near Ceta Centauri (Alpha Centauri II's moon) That is a water moon that's 70 moisture.

Everyone came with us. Carl, Sarge, Chaz , Sonic and Tails will be coming with me with Ryan, Knuckles, Sally and Lance as a backup team in case we errâ€¦ go down.

Happy Landings!

/End Log/

The \_Indomitable \_glided silently through the vacuum, made shiny by Alpha Centauri's glow. She edged closer to an orb that was a color of greens, browns, and blues. Alpha Centauri II. The only habitable planet in the system and where 1/10th of the supercarrier's crew did their training. Fort New Hampshire was where Chris was from. She was no Reach, but she kept the troops at home. Many Marines had come to call the planet "The Ghost of Reach." Or just the "Ghost" since she was just as far away from Earth as Epsilon Eridani and looked basically the same. Closer and closer the behemoth came to the watery moon of ACII There was a small city on it, a floating city as a matter of fact. Since land was short, the inhabitants have chosen to build gigantic ship-cities that floated on the water. Now, with the \_Indomitable \_moored safely, no one ever noticed a ship materialize out of nowhere.

Sonic walked down one of the walkways on the spine of the ship, both admiring the glass ceiling and the stars beyond and at the same time, worrying that this glass is all that protected him from freezing cold space. Sonic hated space, everything about it. The only cool thing about it was airlock jumping. A crazy sport established a decade ago by putting on your suit, standing in a ship's hanger bay, having an EVA pack, then opening the doors. The explosive decompression would suck you out and with the combined movement of the EVA pack, you went so fast. Then after 5 minutes or so, your crewmates would pick you up. Hopefully. They only lost 4 men this last decade, but still, you had to be careful. It was a strictly non-regulation thing too. But

then again, regulation had nothing on the past couple of months. Sonic gazed at Ceta Centauri with wonder that people could actually \_build \_floating cities. Then, something caught Sonic's eye. A ship that seemed to melt out of nowhere. Like in a magic movie, an ancient magic movie where a wizard just jumped out of nowhere wearing an invisibility cloak. "Uh oh." Sonic muttered. And he sped off. Damn these heavy clothes.

Andsworth snuggled in his chair. The UNSC had just recently put in heated seats for all bridge crew. He never felt happier in that entire Slipspace transaction. However, he was getting sleepy, a side effect to the heat. Just then, out of the \_Indomitable'\_s reinforced Plexiglas wiewscreen, a ship managed to melt into view. Just like magic. "Uh oh. Call up the UNSC astrophysics silhouette files!" he cried to Lieutenant Feedin. Maple typed in all sorts of commands and a file popped up. The external cameras managed to snap the ship at 120 different angles so that the admiral could shift the shadow of the ship to that Astrophysics file. The silhouette matched perfectly. Lieutenant Jaffa, take the ship to 123 at course setting one-seven-nine, NOW!" Jaffa saluted in her seat. "Aye, Admiral, sir!" Then, Velo called over to Andsworth. "Sir, Transmission coming from the enemy ship's commander!" The Admiral nodded. "Patch it through to main bridge screen." Velo nodded. "Aye sir, coming to main screen." A man appeared sitting in a command chair surrounded by Intel officers on all sides. Andsworth blinked. The man \_was \_human and had human crew under him. This confirmed Kits' theory. The commander was smiling at the admiral, the evil sort of smile. "Well, well, well, if it isn't the admiral everyone talks about. Salvaging a few of our target's debris for records has sure proved useful." Andsworth stared in wonder. The record? The flight records. All of those would eventually point back to Earth. If they managed to find out that Earth was Humanity's homeworld, all could be lost just as when the Covenant attacked. "Who are you?" the naval officer asked. The commander chuckled throatily. We are the Terran Confederacy, the wave to wipe the humanity that imprisoned us across the Galaxy and beyond." All bridge crew looked out of the viewport to see that the battlecruiser warm up their weapons. All Andsworth could say, as the crimson bolts of energy streaked towards the massive ship were, "Oh boy."

Sonic had just came to first squad's position where Chris was sleeping, Carl and Chaz were playing X-box and Sarge listening to Flip while wearing earphones. The Captain requested it of him. Politely. "Guys!" Sonic yelled, waking Chris. "What's going on?"

Chris grunted heaving himself up to sitting on the mattress. "There's something coming!" Sonic yelled, panting. The ship was huge, even for Sonic. It was hard to get here. The elevators were too slow. 4975 steps to their level from the spinal walkway. Killer on the feet, but good exercise nevertheless. "Like what?" Johnson implied. Combing back his short hair with his hand. The ship then shook violently. Throwing Sonic to his feet and making the others stumble. An alarm blared: \_General's Quarters! Red Alert! Red Alert! The \_Indomitable\_ is under attack! All personnel are advised to evacuate immediately!\_

Those words of warning sent shivers down Sonic's spine. Evacuation? They'd have to move fast or else they'd be taking space-swimming lessons, no charge. Then without warning, his brain sent electronic

messages to his feet to high tail it out of there. Chris seemed to get the same idea also. "Alright, ladies, we have to get our sorry behinds out of this crate! The Indomitable may be going down once and for all so I plan not to be here when she sinks. Now lets get!" The pressure door slid open and first squad files out. Sarge was on flank scolding anyone who fell behind. "Move it you pathetic Grunts!" he yelled to Carl, who's SR2 RRSM sniper rifle was slowing him down, sometimes having an eagle eye had its disadvantages. A squad of technicians ran up ahead. Chris recognized two of them. "Larry, Gerry!" Chris yelled. By some miracle, Chris calling the two techs managed to save them from being crushed by a falling piece of piping. "Cap'n!" Larry called. "Boys, I am giving you direct orders to take the Deadalus down to Centauri II so we can load out our 'Mechs! Move it soldiers!" the two mechanics sprinted off before a ball of flame that threw five techs into the air engulfed them.

The Evacuation Survival Protocol was active, and painted the ground in a green glow illuminating the path to the lifeboats. The circular portals leading to the Bumblebee emergency life vehicle were crammed with as many Marines as the pods could carry, then blast towards either Ceta Centauri or it's parent planet. Chris's squad boarded Sierra Alpha Charlie 27 with space left for 10 more marines plus the pilot. Chris strapped in next to a marine whom's IFF transponder read PFC Gitols. Tails strapped in next to him. Flight officer First Sergeant Defcan took the pilot's seat, dropping the visor over her eyes. "OK, boys and girls, hang on tight. We're blowing this Popsicle stand. Right when she finished, Sierra Alpha Beta 26 blew up, rocking the pod that contained first squad. The crew inside never had a chance. Defcan screamed and slammed the throttle to maximum blowing the tiny escape craft free on the metal behemoth. Too small to house a gravity generator, the crew started to rise, but were pressed back by the Gee Forces. Chris could hear Tails's teeth chatter with the movement of the lifeboat. A duet of lifepods skittered close to Sierra Alpha Charlie, one read Juliet Bravo Mike 65 and the other Victor Lima Alpha 10. Juliet had opened up a channel. Defcan picked up the com. "This is a private channel Juliet, what do you-" Defcan paused as the person on the other end exchanged words inaudible over the rumbling of what the craft had for engines. "A message for Private First Class Sonic the Hedgehog from her highness, Sally Acorn of Mobius, "We'll see you on the ground." And she instructs Captain Chris Vennettilli to make sure he doesn't kill himself. Defcan chuckled slightly at the humor of the Princess's message before laser bolts sizzled past the viewport. The three lifeboats made it into the atmosphere of Alpha Centauri II when Terran Drone fighters chased the trio onto the planet. A drone scored a hit on Victor Lima Alpha 10. The lifeboat seemed to light up as it exploded from the inside out, blowing a hole clean through the ship, causing it to drop like a rock, only to be burned up completely 5,000 feet later. The drones kept pursuing. Defcan's lifepod was next; the lasers clipped the lifeboat, sending it smoking down towards the ground. But then they were too far in. These appeared to be space drones, unsuitable for atmospheric travel. Two dropped, too far into the air and one veered back towards the inky blackness.

"I think I had a dream like this once," Carl said. "What? Escaping by the skin of our teeth and in a tiny craft to boot?" Sonic suggested, sporting clammy skin from their situation. "No," Carl said, starting to cry. "Crashing and dying in a horrible fiery crash." He whined. "Heads up, everyone! Surface coming up at 2 clicks!"

The pod screamed into a valley. They were coming in fast, too fast. Chris's instincts came into gear. He took out his Desert Eagle and shot out the door control panel. The door in the rear slid open and created a vacuum sucking out the high caliber round as it was ejected. He then screamed over the explosive decompression, "Get out now!" He then slapped his chest, releasing the acceleration belt and the Marine rode the air current out of the craft. Needless to say this was going to hurt. He was falling from 50 feet, not bad height, yet this was still high enough to kill a human on impact. But, his trajectory was leading him right into a small lake. He altered his form to create a jackknife dive to avoid pain. The Marine entered the lake at nearly seventy-five miles an hour. Struggling for breath since the impact knocked the wind out of him, Chris struggled for air, just when he surrendered to the darkness, his head broke the surface and he could breathe again.

It seemed that the others agreed since the others in his squad also jumped. More less graceful. Carl cannonballed into the water while Sarge and the others followed suit. Tails did a face first dive and landed on his stomach, ouch. Sonic seemed to have gotten out on land, lucky little bugger. Chris dived into the lake to get the others out of the cold waters.

## 8. Chapter 8 Stranded

### Chapter 8: Stranded

September 12th 3235 1123h

Shi Cho Valley, Alpha Centauri II

Tails awoke gasping for breath. He was lying face-up in water of some sort. He sat up.

The fox appeared to be sitting on a beach of some sort. He was submerged in waist deep water, the cold waves licking at his abdomen. He hurt all over too. Then he remembered: They were flying in the lifeboat. Chris pulled out his gun and shot the door controls. He went out. Carl, Sarge and Chaz went out too. Tails had decided to go with the wind. He unbuckled himself and rode the wind out. He remembered slashing his arm on a jagged edge. That explained the gash on his arm. The blood leaked out of the cut, dripped down his uniform and landed in the water, tainting it crimson. He fell, a long way, and then pain. Then he came here. But, was he alone? Where was everyone else? Then, he spotted Chris a quarter of a kilometer away. He appeared to be pulling Carl ashore, apparently he was hurting too. But where was Sonic? Was he dead? Was his oldest friend really dead?

"Tails! Tails!" He heard someone call. Tails turned around to see Sonic sprinting toward him, burdened by the combat armor. Tails couldn't help smiling. Sonic was alive. "Sonic, you're OK." Sonic gave himself a self-satisfied smirk. "Of course I'm OK, You think I was going to start dying yet?" Tails shook his head. Was there any doubt? Before Chris and the others arrived, Sonic was a real hero; all ready a celebrity planet wide. Sonic saw hundreds of battles since he was a kid. Tails was only 12, but he knew of Sonic's travels before he was born. "Uh oh, here comes Captain Crack-up." Sonic said, shaking his head. Sonic hated Chris, not his guts, just hated him.

"Hey, Tails."

Chris ran up to him. "Tails, you're hurt." He said. Paling at the sight of Tails's gash on his arm. "We should get that biofoamed right away." Sonic gave a look that said 'what a worry wart' Chris saw this, "Shut up, hedgehog. We're not paying you to make fun of me, that's right, these eyes aren't for sniping covies only." He said, seeing Sonic's innocent face. He stuck the canister in Tails cut and pressed the release. The foam sprayed in the wound. Tails shook as the foam filled up the wound, he wretched as it stung. "Don't worry, we're done. OK, that should be good for a day or so." The Captain called in his team. "OK, Marines. We may be the only squad out here, so lets head over to the lifeboat, strip it of any valuables, and link up with Sal. I know that the flyboys keep some beer and cigarettes in the storage containers, so let's find it. MOVE OUT!"

Up in space, Andsworth was cringing in his seat. The last attack had been brutal, crippling 10 decks. Two hundred marines and Naval personal had been killed, and his first helmsman was incapacitated, his left leg missing. All that were left were Lieutenants Velo, Feedin and Jaffa, as well as several other bridge officers. "Incoming transmission sir, from the Terrans." Said Velo. "Patch it through." Andsworth said tired, trying to wipe the image of destruction from his face. The man appeared again, grinning and sipping wine. "Why hello, you human traitor. Had enough yet?" The Admiral stiffened. He had no love for these humans anymore. "Actually, we don't want you anymore, Admiral. Without your marines, you're just an old man in a titanium box waiting to die. It's the marines on the surface we want." Then, he ordered dropships to be sent to the planet's surface to find the marines, and slaughter them. When the screen turned off, Andsworth said into the holotank, "Can you help us get to the moon so we can repair?" AI Terra appeared and said, "I'll do whatever it takes, Admiral."

"OK, fins stabilizing out descent, and we're good." Ryan Percy said. He had control of second squad's lifeboat. "Keep her going, Ryan, you're doing a great job." Her Royal Highness Sally Acorn said. Ryan blushed, and then returned to watching the approaching land. Lance McGregor sat behind them and Knuckles next to him. Four people in that tiny squad. It seemed like suicide. Their pilot had been killed before he got in and the other marines were also dead when fire exploded and blew them into a wall at over 100 KPH. So they were on their own. Lance sang an old Scottish song while Ryan navigated the bumblebee into a snowy forest. He fired the OmniTek retro boosters developed and patented by Stuart Labute. She slowly sank and thudded in the ground. Twenty feet later they stopped completely. "Great job, Master Corporal." Sally responded popping open the lifeboat's rear hatch exposing them to the slightly sub-zero temperatures. "Now we set up camp, boys"

They reached the lifeboat. It was as quiet as a grave, considering that all the occupants were dead. Chris retrieved a flashlight from his breast pocket. Bathing the inside of the pod with yellow light, revealing the Marines, all dead. The light reflecting off their blank eyes. "It doesn't look good." Carl said suddenly. "The crash must've caused their necks to break, judging by the odd positions, or even a 3rd degree concussion when it first touched down. The pilot was the first to die. The pod slammed into the cliff wall, she was slammed into the control panel. No Chance." Chris looked at Carl, "Santorini,

when the heck did you become a doctor?" Carl smirked. "I took a course in high school." "You should be in the medic corps, never mind the marines." The Captain said. "OK, storage container." Chris took a crowbar from an emergency crevice and pried open the panel. Inside, BR55s, M16s M249s, MA5Cs and a SRRM 2M sniper rifle were holstered. Chris passed them about, and tossed a pack of cigarettes. Zippo's self igniting cigarettes. "I thought Zippos were extinct!" Sarge said happily tapping the front to ignite the tobacco stick. Chaz said, "I'll pack up the beer!" He heaved a 24 pack into his backpack, it fit amazing enough.

Once outside, Chris took out an HE grenade, pulled the pin and said. "You boys went along to protect Earth. I just couldn't imagine you handing in your resignations like this. God be with you." He tossed the grenade into the still open crew quarters. His squad looked sad, even though they knew the marines for sheer minutes, every soldier was like a brother or a sister. The grenade exploded, consuming the escape pod in flame. It wouldn't go out for hours considering the amount of fuel the pod had. "Ok, come on, let's get while the getting's good before reinforcements show up."

## 9. Chapter 9 Planet Fall

Chapter 9: Planet fall

September 12th 3235 1200h

Tu Zu Pass, en route to second squad position

Sergeant Avery Johnson log

/Begin Log/

Well, well, well, it seems that this pretty thing managed to stay alive given the time I was frozen alive. Good thing I bought Durocell! I always liked that little pink bunny with the drums. Anyway! We're going through the Tu Zu mountain pass to get to second squad. I don't get it, Shi Cho, Tu Zu, might as well call it fried teriyaki chicken, or spring rolls!

Alpha Centauri II is no Reach, but this planet is **\*\*NOT\*\*** glassed by a bunch of split-chinned freaks and, it smells good! I think I'm going to go yell at that private Santorini, won't help, but it makes ME feel good!

/End Log/

Chris looked back. The lifeboat was still burning. And it appeared to be catching some attention. The moment Chris saw a Terran dropship close in, he ordered his troops to

Sprint into the mountains, burdened by the extra weapons, and alcohol, the trip took longer. The pass was actually the remains of a glacier, over 100,000 years old, which made it an easy climb. Snow matted the ground a thousand feet later. "God, its cold." Sonic shivered. He chattered his teeth. The UNSC never put heating coils into their armor, so if gunfire didn't get them, hypothermia would. Chris smiled. These mountains looked familiar. When he was 14, he went to the Swiss Alps for a family vacation. He broke his foot



skiing, his mother was yelling at him so much at the hospital, but it was the best vacation ever. "Man, how high are we?" Chaz asked ten minutes later. Chris took out an altimeter. "1500 feet." He replied. Already the air was thinning and his ears were popping. Tails didn't say anything. As a fox, his fur protected him from the weather. He was as calm as a summer breeze. There was a long way to go until the valley

"Well, its not much, but its home!" Sally commented after an hour of work, the squad stood proud to admire their handiwork. Truth be told it wasn't the best tents ever. Two people to a tent. So later that night, they set in. "Ok, who's sleeping where?" Ryan asked.

"I call first tent!" Knuckles said. "Second tent please." Sally said rolling her eyes. Ryan and Lance were left. Both couldn't choose. "Rock, Paper, Scissors, SHOOT!" both said. Ryan won, scissors over paper. "I get second tent!" he yelled triumphantly. "OK." Lance said, going into the first tent. Sally was dumbstruck. Spending the night with this? Not on her life. "C- can't we switch, please?" she asked nicely. "Ooh, sorry, princess. They did do Rock, Paper, Scissors!" Knuckles said. "Damn you." She cursed under her breath. "Alright, Percy lets get settled in."

"Only one blanket, Sally." Ryan said looking into the pack. This kept getting worse. "Fine, OK, same tent, fine. One blanket, fine. But does this mean we have to sleep in the same bed?" she said pleadingly. "Well, unless one of us lies in the snow and dies. That won't look good on either of our records." Ryan said. He was having the time of his life.

Sally didn't want to lie in the snow and catch pneumonia, half her fur missing, generally it was the fur that served as a second set of clothes. If that wentâ€¦ "OK, OK" we'll sleep in the same bed, but I'm not taking off my uniform." She said warningly. "OK, if you won't I will." Ryan said sheepishly. His shirt came off, he had big chest muscles. "Disturbing?" Ryan said, chuckling. "Shut up, Corporal." Sally said, averting her gaze.

Knuckles and Lance were having the time of their lives probably.

"What else you got?" Knuckles said happily. Lance dug into his backpack revealing many Marvel and DC comics. "Classics, Batman, Superman, and Wonderwoman." Lance replied laying out the graphic tomes. "Ooooh." Said Knuckles.

"This cannot be happening." Sally said, keeping her gaze at the tent wall. "Yeah, sorry, but I happen to move around in my sleep, so I might roll over you, or on top." Sally shuddered. She got her M6C, cocked it, and tried to go to sleep. "Chris, please, get over here now!" she whispered into her pillow, and closed her eyes amongst Ryan's loud snoring.

10. Chapter 10 Status: We're in trouble

Chapter 10: Status: We're in Trouble

September 13th 3235 1300h

Tu Zu Mountain pass, En route to second squad's position

"I'm hungry." Carl said. God, we've been walking for a whole day and we aren't even there yet. Chris thought. For four hours Sonic and Tails sang 1000 bottles of beer on the wall. Chris had heard enough of that song in high school. "938 bottles of beer on the wall, 938 bottles of beer, take one down, pass it around, 937 bottles of beer on the wall!" Sarge took a long drag on a cigarette he just lit. "Sarge you shouldn't be smoking." Johnson stopped and looked at Chris. "Why's that?" Well, if you keep doing that, you'll get lung cancer and die." The sergeant laughed "Please! I survived a bunch of alien parasitic freak shows, I sure as heck can survive a smoke. Besides, my father smoked every after graduating, and he lived until the ripe old age of 38." I bet second squad's having the time of their lives. Little did he know how wrong he was.

235 bottles later, Sonic burped. He appeared to have grabbed a can of beer out of Carl's backpack and chugged it all down. Chris gritted his teeth and turned to Sonic. "Burp again, and it'll be the last thing you'll ever do." He said. Sonic stood hands on his hips. "Why? You gonna shoot me?" The Captain shook his head. "Nope. We'll all be under a hundred feet of snow and ice. Check it out Sonic! We're in a mountain pass! Ever see Mulan? When she blew up the snow cap and made an avalanche?" "No." Sonic said. "I did!" Tails said holding his hand up high, then noticed the glare, from the human's eyes. "Oops, sorry not important." The fox said, edging away with a pink face. Just then, an explosion rocked the ground. Chris was thrown 10 feet into the air then fell on the powder. He checked his scalp. A slight bump, but nothing serious. Who else was in here?

"Sir, up there!" Chaz said pointing to a small mesa where three troopers were. These marines wore armor that looked too big for their body. These must be Terrans. "TAKE COVER!" Chris yelled. First squad ducked behind a rock. The slugs were growing closer. Sonic got hit in the head with cold snow. Chris looked up and saw that snow was starting to fall from the noise that the Terran guns produced. "Those idiots!" Chris yelled, and he tried to deliver a warning. "Stop shooting please! You're going to cause an avalanche! You're committing suicide!"

A few hundred meters away, the Terrans said to one another, "What's that guy saying?" a private said mockingly. The captain replied, "I think he's saying: 'Shoot me, Kill me!'" the troopers cackled and kept firing.

"That does it. Carl, take one out!" Carl took his sniper rifle and zoomed in to x10. "Happy birthday, sweetheart." And pulled the trigger. The 14.5 mm fin stabilized slug was blown from the muzzle at 1000 feet a second. The bullet caught a Terran right in the faceplate, blowing him away. "Good shot, good shot." Johnson complimented. Then Carl said, "Sir, why don't we get to the end of the area, then frag the peaks, the avalanche could seal up the pass and it would take them days to get over. Sonic took a pair of H9 DP HE fragmentation grenades out of his pocket and handed one to Chris. "Good idea, but how do weâ€¦" And then Chris saw Tails, his tails wagging about, just like a helicopter rotor. "You." Chris said, smiling suddenly. "You're going to help us out!" Tails was puzzled. "How?" Chris handed the young fox the grenade. "Fly up to the peaks, toss the grenade in, set it for 30 seconds, and then come back down. Tails was worried. "What if I get shot?" Chris smiled warmly. "We'll

cover you. GO!" Miles then snapped to action as the tails spun faster and faster, lifting him off the ground. Even after all the time Chris knew him, he was still amazed when Tails flew. "OK, boys, let's give the kid a hand. Covering Fire! Sonic go ahead and give 'em a surprise." Sonic gave Chris a thumbs-up, smiled then, disappeared leaving a trail of footsteps behind him.

Bullets pockmarked the Terrans positions. The troopers moved back safe, taking aim at the fox, whenâ€¦" "Hey boys." Sonic said. The marines looked at Sonic as though they never seen them before. "You'll never hit him with those things, too big and bulky." The captain snarled. "But we can hit you!" and fired, blowing a hole where the hedgehog \_should've \_been. "Where'd he go, private?" the captain asked. The private took his rifle and aimed it at his superior's head, the hedgehog was standing on the helmet, blowing a raspberry. "Hey, what are youâ€¦" the gun went off and a supersonic slug passed right over the noncom's head, just missing him. "Don't shoot me, moron, shoot the blue rat!"

"Rat? I'm a hedgehog. Can't you tell the difference?" Sonic said, leaning on the officer's abdomen. The captain made to grab a bayonet, but when he struck, he only slashed snow. Just then the hedgehog was on his faceplate, sticking his tongue out. "Get him off me, get him off me!" the captain yelled. But Sonic took out a black marker, and went to work. But the private, was staring down-pass, looking at the retreating humans and why they were running.

High up, Tails was getting tired. The journey up drained his energy and he started to lose altitude. Just before he fell, he pulled the pin of the grenade and tossed it into the snow. His tails gave away, and he started to drop, faster and faster.

Johnson saw the movement. He sprinted, and leaped, catching the falling Mobian. The speed sent Johnson into the ground, but at least Miles was safe. The kid's arm was banged up when he scratched the mountain wall. Needed some bandages. Johnson carried Tails to the group that was still running. That's when they heard an explosion.

Sonic was finished drawing, a Groucho Marx moustache and weird glasses, plus a Jack Sparrow beard. Sonic then heard the boom and said, "Sorry folks but that sound means that time has just run out. See ya!" the two Terrans looked up into the sky to see that the snow was coming down. "Oh crap." The captain said.

"Hey, what happened to Tails?" Sonic asked half a minute later when he rejoined the squad. "He got banged up bad. He was unconscious when he fell a long way and he looks like he's coming to." Johnson said. Tails cracked open his eyes. "Sonic?" he asked. Then looked at his cuts and then at the approaching snow. Then, his head sagged as he fainted in the sergeant's arms. "What's the plan? Sonic asked. "Run faster!" Carl said. "I could've thought of that." Sonic said sheepishly. "Look, the pass is ending!" Chaz said pointing up ahead. They could see a snowy valley, and a steep drop. "Oh man." Chris said, analyzing the situation. "Hurry up!" Sonic said eyeing the snow. "That's it!" Chris said, sprinting back toward the avalanche. "He's lost it." Carl said. "No, he's a genius." Johnson said running with him. "OK, I guess we're crazy too." Chaz said. Both he and Carl ran behind Johnson. "Not me then, I'm a perfectly fine, normalâ€¦" but he never got to finish. The avalanche swallowed him up.

Inside, the snow churned everyone around. No one knew what direction was up. Then, the snow went over the cliff. Everyone screamed, but then, they landed on something soft. Maybe more snow. Sonic was the first to make it up after the thunder stopped. He was alive. The Captain's plan had worked! Crazy as it seemed. Carl, Chaz, and Johnson surfaced, Tails still knocked out, oblivious to what was happening. Chris came up last. First in, Last out. "Whoa! It worked." He said, smirking, his air soaking. Sonic had just gotten his quills the way he liked it. Now he'd have to comb them all over again. "And since my PDA is still working, we're just a kilometer away from second squad's beacon.

Nice!"

But in a tree a kilometer away, Sally saw the whole thing on her binoculars. "Chris you're an idiot." She said, climbing down.

Minutes later, leader and leader met up. Chris thought he'd never see his friends again. Just when he was about to say a warm hello, he got a cold slap on the face.

Carl had been on vacation once. To Hawaii. The locals there greeted the tourists by putting flowered necklaces over the tourist's heads. Maybe this was a Mobian greeting. No, defiantly not a greeting, just a plain old-fashioned slap of anger

Chris lost his footing. Stunned and angry. "What in God's name was that for!" he yelled at the princess. "Do you know what you've done?" she asked angrily "Chris rubbed the tender spot. "No. I don't." Sally leered harder. Something in those sapphire eyes made you sympathetic when she was sad, but made you flinch when she was angry. "That avalanche you've just caused might've alerted some enemy forces nearby. They'll be here in days! Maybe hours!" She replied." Sonic snickered. "Alright. OK, we screwed up. I take responsibility for allowing the plan to be carried out. In the morning we can move.

The princess calmed down. "OK, I'm getting a little ahead of myself. Lets head back to camp." It took no more than five minutes and then, they were there. "Want the tour?" She asked Chris. "OK, sure." Sally nodded. "OK, there's tent 1 and there's camp 2. Want to recap in case we missed anything?" she said smugly. "Wait, this is the whole camp?"

Sally was calm. "Yes, unless you were expecting something else?" Chris remembered the eyes. "No, this is fine. The human said. OK, troops, fall in, pick a bunk. "Wait. Chris, there's only one blanket each and only room for a few. "Cripes." Chris said. Well, we don't have much choice." Sally stiffened

"So," Chris said later in tent 2. "Why isn't Sonic with us?" Chris said, taking off his armor. "Apparently, he found comic books more appealing." Sally said, then made the look that said, 'he's so immature.' Ryan was in the tent too. Chris was used to Ryan bunking with him. Once in Mercia when they were on riot duty, Chris had to take earplugs from the firing range to dampen Ryan's snores. Chris left his clothes on; his armor stayed in a corner of whatever room was available. He never slept in pajamas; He settled in, cozy even when there was barely any room. Amazingly, everyone else was in tent

1 reading the comics. So, Chris slowly, went to sleep,

## 11. Chapter 11 Goodbye Fort New Hampshire

### Chapter 11: Goodbye Fort Hampshire

September 14th 3235 0600h

Hampshire valley

Chris decided to walk about. He knew these woods. This was where Fort New Hampshire was. Chris spent his three weeks of training here. A 'three week wonder' they called those recruits. Chris was the shipped back to Earth to fight in the Second Rainforest War.

He could imagine how close they were. He could imagine being welcomed like a hero, his DI's saluting him and enlisted soldiers looking up to him. It felt good to be back. Chris was tired despite getting over 8 hours of sleep so he went back to camp and made himself a cup of coffee. Tails yawned and came out of his tent. "Morning, Chris." He said, sitting down near a fire. Even in the day it was very cold up here. "Good morning, Tails. The human said to the fox. "How's your arm?" Tails lifted his sleeve up to reveal cuts that were slightly covered by skin. The fur was starting to grow back. "Well, after that fall, I won't be doing any more base jumping for a while." Chris laughed. One by one, the rest of the unit came out, yawning and rubbing sleep out of their eyes. "Well, I'm glad everyone is now together." Chris said standing up so everyone could see. "But phase one of our mission has been completed only. Phase two is to get to Larry and Gerry so we can get back up to the Indomitable. If she's still up there." Ryan spoke up. "How do we find out where the dropship is?" Tails was typing on a laptop. "I have the answer to that. There's a base nearby. Maybe they have communications." Chris lightened up. "Fort New Hampshire. It was my home for training. She may have active personnel." The team nodded and set off.

Minutes later, a scream filled the air. The captain yelled "GET DOWN!" a dropship blew overhead. It wasn't a D77-TC Pelican, but a blockier, larger ship. It's heading in the direction of the base!" Chris yelled and ran ahead. Sonic yelled, "Chris! Wait! It might be a trap!" But Chris didn't listen, he ran with Tails at his right and Johnson at his left, both telling him to slow down. But when Chris reached the high ridge, the sight he saw made him gasp.

The base was in flames. Many buildings had holes in them, and inside, dead soldiers lay.

Chris looked stunned as Terrans walked about the base, many shooting out windows and UNSC flags. Then, what Chris saw next made hatred boil up in him. The Terrans had a soldier. A sergeant to be exact. The older man was held up by two other troopers. The Lieutenant commanding them said. "Now tell us, where is Earth?" the sergeant stiffened. "I'll never tell. Loose lips sink ships." The Lieutenant stepped forward and took out a knife. Chris watched in horror as the dagger was brought to the marine's throat, Sally came up and gasped Tails looked away but everyone else was too shocked to do anything. Then, he slashed. Crimson came, more slashing, more blood. This was brutal. And it forced a tear of sympathy to go down the battle hardened marine's face. Why did these creatures do this? Now with the

sergeant dead, the two troopers who held him up emptied a clip of automatic fire into the corpse, turning the snow red.

Sergeant Johnson then slid Carl's sniper rifle from its grips and held it in his hands. "Sergeant, what are you doing?" Chris said. Johnson said nothing. With eagle accuracy, Johnson fired a shot that passed right through the Lieutenant's torso. He nailed the two support troopers too. With the last shot, he fired it into an explosive barrel that exploded and sent four Terran marines one hundred feet into the air, where they crunched down on the ground. Johnson dropped the magazine and reloaded. Chris yelled, "Cover's blown! Pick your targets." And the UNSC forces settled in. Tails said, "Sonic! Look! A tank!" Tails was right. Sonic pointed out a tank in the center of the compound. This was much bigger than a Scorpion M808B Main Battle Tank. It had two barrels, and slits where the driver could see. "Don't worry." Ryan said. "I've been around tanks. We're way outside its effective radius," he smiled. But that's when everyone noticed a change. The tank started to sprout legs or supports like a backhoe as it dug into the ground. The cannons turned upward. It looked more like artillery now. "You were saying?" Lance said to Ryan. The cannons went off. Artillery shells blew into the air and arched at their position. "Scatter!" Johnson yelled to the troops. But before anyone could do so, the bomb exploded nearby and blew everyone airborne for a few seconds. They hit the ground running, until something blocked their path. It wore red armor. More larger than a marine. This one had a hose on its hand. "You all are going to burn. He said then aimed his hand at them. Flame erupted from his hand at the tube and sprayed at Chris and his unit. The fire clipped his hand. Christopher James Vennettilli knew pain. He had been burnt by plasma once before, and burned by fire. This experience was no different from the first. "Aaaaahh!" he screamed, cradling his scorched hand. The glove had protected it from serious burning, but when he pulled it off, the hand was very red and burned. He thrust it into the snow, sobbing over the burning. "The captain's down." Johnson said. Now it's my turn. Hedgehog, fire at his back!" Sonic obeyed and shot. The 9mm bullets from the BR55 punctured the steel tube and set the plasma inside ablaze, and sending it scurrying all over the trooper. "Oh my God! I'm burning!" the Terran screamed and ran off, would he die? Maybe, maybe not. "Chris, are you alright?" Tails asked. "Captain, Captain, your hand!" Carl and Chaz said. After taking it out of the snow, the hand was still very red and it hurt to touch. "God!" Chris said. It hurt to expose it to oxygen. "OK, we'll get some burn cream on it and we'll be OK." Knuckles said. "I can't hold my gun." Chris said, examining his palm. The veins were showing clearly, the blood boiled. "Sonic, take my battle rifle off." Sonic nodded, untying the BR55 off of Chris's back. The assault weapon fell and left a deep indent in the snow. Chris sighed. "Tails." Chris said, looking as though he regretted saying the words. The fox's ears perked up. He was surprised and excited about something. "Yeah, Chris?" he asked uncertainly. "Take the gun." He said, not looking at Tails.

Miles Prower wasn't a soldier, he wasn't even trained for combat. All he did was hold an X38 OmniTek StunGun and shock anyone who came too close to him. He was a red belt in Earth, Chinese karate, he had the highest state test scores in the country, but he couldn't use a gun. "Chris, I can't." he said. Chris then looked. "Just take it, don't fire it." Chris said. He reached over and clicked on the safety. "Better? Take it. I can't use it." He sounded impatient. Johnson stood up. "Sir, giving a weapon to the kid? I don't think it's

right." Chris looked, "Noted, sergeant." Chris then said. "OK, I think I can make this work." He dragged the BR55 to his lap. Sing his free hand, he clicked on the 'Clip release' button, took out the 36 round magazine, emptied it, then slapped it back in. as an added measure, he cocked the rifle to eject any round in the chamber he forgot. Now the weapon was completely empty. Just to make sure, Chris shut off the digital ammo counter. Now, nobody knew that Tails had an empty gun, nobody but them. "How's that?" Chris asked. "O-OK, I guess." Tails took the gun from Chris's lap. It was light, lighter than the X38. "So nothing's in it right?" Chris nodded. "That's right. I on the other hand, will have a loaded weapon on hand." Chris slid his hand into his side holster and grabbed his Desert Eagle, checked the load, and straightened it. He had two spare clips on hand in his utility belt in case he ran out. Chris knew how to reload in one hand.

"OK, gentlemen, we need to move out. "Tails, you have permission to use that rifle to scare off anyone and that stun gun to level 5. Tails nodded. Level 5 was for long hour stuns. Roughly 8 to 9 hours, nothing fatal. Maybe those Terrans would lose a few IQ points. Chris cocked his pistol. "Move out!"

"Use radios to communicate. Carl, take position in that tree, Chaz, on me, Lance, take point. Ryan, flank me. Sal, look after Tails, Sonic and Knuckles. Sarge will go with you too." The princess nodded and moved in another direction. "Tuck in gentlemen; this will be a hell of a firefight."

Carl Santorini was sitting in the middlemost branches of the tree. Completely obscured from any Terran's eyes, but his S2 AM's barrel was sticking out just inches, his scope followed. Carl laughed as he set the zoom to x10. Chris was below, "Get ready to move on my signal. They waited until the advance guards were turned away. "Carl, hit them now!" Carl pulled on the trigger, the blot flew out of the barrel and blew the first advance guard clear off his feet. The second turned around and Carl brought him down. The camp was alive with action. The tank/turret deployed and was searching for targets. "Second squad, you are clear for a shot at that relay station.

"Run Tails!" Sally said. Urging the fox to run towards the relay station. From there, they could access the planet-wide network. "Ah, this must be a wireless network." Tails said as he sat down on a tree stump ten feet away from the station, Sally turned and saw that Sonic, Knuckles, and Johnson were lying in the snow, groaning. Sally turned again to see a man standing there. The man had body armor and a visor that slid up to reveal his face. "Why hello there." He said, he could've smiled, but his mask prevented it from showing through the fabric "Get lost." She said. "I can't do that, and I'm afraid that I have to take you into custody. Any attempts to resist will result in..." then a \_whump! \_And a \_crack \_as Sally punched the Terran in the face, breaking his nose. The Terran exhaled and staggered. His eye was twitching and blood was seeping from his nose. "I see I've made a bad first impression." He said, no longer sweet-sounding. "The hell you did!" Sally said raising her fists. "Fine, I'll take care of you then the kid." He lowered his visor then disappeared. Disappeared into thin air. "Tails, where'd he go?" Sally asked, raising her rifle cautiously. "I don't know." He said, trying glance at where he might've gone. That was when an invisible foot kicked Sally in the back, cracking her spine viciously. She exhaled as she hit the snow. Tails was next. The Terran jerked the fox in the

air, holding him in place, strong hand muscles crushing his windpipe. Tails gagged. He also spun his tails in hope to lift off and escape his grasp, but the invisible man then reappeared laughing. "Well, well, well. A flying rat. You'll look great on my den wall, your head mostly!" He laughed manically, then, hands snapped out, grasped the trooper's neck, and snapped it. His eyes went blank, and he slumped, dropping Tails in the snow. Tails felt his neck, saw the body and edged away from it. He had been that close to death. Sally stood above him, blocking the sun. "The freak made the mistake of reappearing right before killing you." Tails was still gasping as Sally helped him up. "So, how'd it go?" She asked gesturing to the laptop "Well, we got Larry and Gerry on the line. I told them to keep the engines warm, ready to go." "OK." Sally said nodding. "Now let's get back to Chris."

"They're taking too long." Ryan said eyeing the camp through his binoculars. "Hey, here they come!" Carl said. A human and four Mobians came from the buildings. "So?" Chris said over the radio. "Well, Tails got Larry and Gerry to keep the engines running and we got some info on the Terrans. Chris nodded. "Well?" Tails came on. "Their standard infantry units are marines. The plasma marines are known as firebats. Invisible troopers are called Ghosts. Stay away from those. The tanks that were artillery are called Siege Tanks. What we haven't seen are Vulture Hoverbikes, not to be confused with the 'Mechs. Goliath walkers which are 'Mechs. They can't contend with a Cougar at all. And we didn't see a Terran Battlecruiser at all. And I don't think we should see that at all. Nearly wiped our ship out." "OK. Do you have coordinates?" Chris asked. "Yeah, It's coming on your HUD." An arrow appeared on Chris's visor. It had a 200 mile length. "Great, more up north." Carl said shaking his head. "Well, we'd better get going before nightfall." Ryan said. "The temperature gets way below zero."

The unit marched for hours. The suns dipped lower in the sky. "Damn, I forgot my mittens." Sonic said. Knuckles scoffed too. "Shut up. Hedgehog." Chris said. "Hey," Johnson said. "What?" Tails said, looking at the sergeant with a questioning look. "I spy a Pelican!" Johnson said. "Well, well, well." Chris said smiling. "He's right!" The Pelican was nestled in a score of rocks. It was painted in snowy white camouflage. "Nice bird." Sally said stroking her armor plating. "70mm chain guns, 102mm humming missiles, Lotus anti-tank mines! Jesus! This bird has it all!" Ryan said examining the firepower. "Why didn't they use it?" Chris said walking to the rear hatch. It was unlocked. "I don't know, maybe it was only an escape craft." Sonic scoffed and wall ran up the side, sitting on the wing. "If this was an escape craft, they would've used it." "He's right, sir." Johnson said. "If this was an escape craft, this beauty wouldn't be here. I think it would be a transport. I bet these guns aren't even for this Pelican." "Well, it doesn't matter who they belong to, because the whole planet may be enemy controlled."

Mount up!" the unit filed into the troop bay. "OK, I'm flying." Sally said. "Shotgun!" Ryan yelled "Damn." Sally muttered.

The two took helmets from their places and hooked them on their heads. Ryan's helmet contained a device that moved the 70mm chaingun wherever Ryan's head was pointed, a centuries old trick still useful. "Everyone on?" Sally asked checking to see if everyone was buckled in. "OK, we off." The princess lifted the joystick and the engines roared to life. The powerful jets lifting the Pelican into the air.



At a cruising height of Two hundred feet, Sally opened throttle. The D77-TC lurched forward. 0-150 mph in five seconds. "Alright, night's coming on, let's get some sleep. Princess, wanna turn in, put it on autopilot?" Chris asked, laying on the seats, like a bed. Sally shook her head. "No, I'll keep at it, I'll have some coffee. "Ryan?" Chris said eying the copilot. "Nah, get some sleep Captain." "OK." Chris lied down and dozed himself to sleep amongst the turbulence.

"Hey, Ryan, look they have heating on this rig!" Sally said amazed. She turned the dial. Within minutes, warm air came through the gratings in the wall and pleasure flooded all over them. "God, that feels good." Ryan said, sinking in his seat. "Couldn't have said it better myself, Corporal." Sally said, pressing buttons and dials alike. "Well, I'm turning in." Ryan said stretching and reclining his seat, another unexpected twist. "Heh, alright, you do that, then." Sally cracked her neck and threw her hair over her shoulder. It was going to be a long night.

## 12. Chapter 12 David and Goliath

### Chapter 12: David and Goliath

September 15th 3235 0712 h

En Route to Capitol City, Huron, Pelican Sigma 128

Captain Chris Vennettilli Log

/Begin Log/

Yawn Morning. I feel better today. The only one that seemed to be doing any work was Sally. Damn she's a good pilot. Sonic really was attached to that chain gun he even got a lawn chair. where the heck did that come from? He got one, bolted it to the floor, and slept right there. We're coming up on a city called Huron. Well, believe it or not, Huron is the capitol city of Alpha Centauri II. Boasting a population of three million and twenty seven people, it's the biggest city on this planet. I never noticed this before but Tails picked up a weird looking gun from Fort New Hampshire. He said it was what a Ghost had on him. I'm gonna give her a spin right after I get out.

/End Log/

"OK, gentlemen, we are five minutes to touchdown." Sally said lowering the yoke and dropping the throttle. A flash of light, plus a supersonic boom caused the Mobian to lurch the Pelican down forward. "What in God's name was that?" Sonic yelled, gripping the chain gun due to their sudden descent. "Anti-Air batteries." Ryan said, taking co-pilot control. "It seems that they've detected us." Chris climbed into the cockpit. "Put us down in those trees, Princess!" Sally nodded. "Sure thing, Chris." The Pelican hovered feet above the ground. The pilot dropped the landing gear. The wheels thumped on the ground, supporting the heavy craft. "OK we're good. Hey, just before we leave, Sally, can you turn up the heat one lat time?" Ryan asked. "No, it can't go up any higher." Ryan wasn't discouraged. "Try it again." Sally sighed and cranked the heating lever. It popped out of its place. "You broke it." Ryan said. "Shut up, and let's go." She said. The unit stamped in the permafrost. The evergreens would serve

to cover the dropship for the time being. "It's so cold; I'm shivering through my fur." Tails said, stamping his feet to get his blood flowing. "Tell me about it." Knuckles said, also shivering; only he was rubbing his gloves together. "The sooner we move, the sooner we'll be warm." Chris told them, adjusting his armor temperature to keep him from freezing. "Amen to that." Johnson growled, lighting a cigarette. "Stow that gun. We might need it later." Tails nodded, slipping the Terran rifle on his back.

The walk took 20 minutes. A kilometer from the borders, the temperature started to rise.

"Ah that's more like it." Sonic sighed. "Don't get too comfy. The enemy might be inside the city too." Chris said, scanning the intersection. The traffic light was stuck on red. A Ford Focus XLS was sitting idle on a curb, its door open. The radio playing the sector news. "Wow, nobody's there." Carl said, looking at the idle car. "Well, two possibilities. Nobody's alive to close it, or nobody's free to close it." Before anyone could answer, a gauss shot rang out. The unit ducked behind an empty semi truck. A body of a Terran fell down. The armor clanged on the pavement. A hole blown through his torso by a gauss round. His faceplate broken. Blank blue eyes stared up. "What the hell?" Carl wondered out loud looking at the body. "Wow. that was unexpected." Chris said, amazed "Theories?" Sonic said, looking at the human. "Well, he is a Terran, no doubt. He was shot by a gauss round. Terrans carry those guns and he still seems to have his weapons. So my guess is that he was rebelling or isn't on their side." Sally said, "Isn't on their side? What does that mean?" Tails spoke up. "He means that that was a friendly Terran." He said, averting his eyes from the hole. "A friendly Terran? This is all so sudden to me." Knuckles said acting surprised. "Cut the sarcasm. If there was one, there's bound to be others. Tails, still got those IFFs?" Tails checked. "I have 10 signals left." Sonic's mouth dropped. "40 kills in half an hour? Boy, we're dead." Chris was looking up the avenue. "I wonder what got them." Suddenly, figures appeared. Chris raised his rifle. The figures stopped. "Don't shoot!" the leader said. "Identify yourselves." Chris barked. "Staff Sergeant Charlie Tiggs, Gamma Company." Chris lowered his rifle. His implants confirmed it. "Alright Sarge come on with us." Tiggs backed away suddenly. "No! We have to scatter! The Mech is coming!" Chris raised an eyebrow. "Mechs?" Tiggs was about to respond when machine guns roared out. Red marks appeared on the front of Tiggs's vest. He fell to his knees, looked forward and collapsed. "RUN!!" The marines under the late sergeant's command squealed. A bipedal machine lumbered forward. "Uh Chris, remember the Goliath I warned you about?" Tails said. "Oh." Chris said, wincing.

"Sudan 1 this is Goliath 23, I have targets in site." The Goliath pilot said to his dropship. "Goliath 23, chop 'em down." The Goliath pilot flipped on the firing controls "Roger that."

The machine guns on the Goliath cut into the Semi's cargo wall. "Oh man, we're gonna die in here." Lance said. "That's what they said at the Alamo." Carl said. The bullet holes came closer. "Don't worry, if there's one thing I know about guns, it's this:" Ryan said. "They always run out of ammo sometime." Then the guns stopped.

"Oh no." The Goliath pilot said.

"HAH!!" Sonic yelled. He had time to laugh on top of the truck at the

Goliath when a missile streaked his way. The hedgehog yelped as he dived for cover. "Whoa, they have missiles!" Carl said. "Thank you, Captain Obvious!" Sonic said, veins showing in his temple. "Oh, don't you worry; I won't be using these missiles on you." A filtered voice told them. Chris poked his head over the engine. "These are Anti Air missiles. The only reason I shot at the rat," "Will people stop calling me that?!" Sonic yelled. "He was high enough to be judges as an anti air target." Chris sighed. "Oh, well, that's good." There was laughter. "Are you kidding? I will stomp you into the ground." The Goliath accelerated. "Oh boy." Johnson said. "Beat it!" Chaz yelled. The unit sprinted up the street. The Goliath nipping at their heels. A left, a right, a right and another left. A dead end. "Oh this is it!" Carl said eying the approaching 'Mech. "I never had a girlfriend in my life!" Chaz looked at him. "I thought Katie Rawston had a thing for you in 10th grade." Carl stared. "Get out, she did?" Sonic yelled. "Not the time, boys!" Johnson thought of something. "The gun!" Chris looked at the sergeant. "Good God, that's it!" Chris said. "Tails! Shoot him!" Tails unhooked the gun. He aimed it, but his hands trembled. "I can't do it!" "Tails! Shoot him!" "Chris, I cant!" "Tails!" "Chris!" "Tails!" "Chris!" "Shoot it!" "No!" "We're about to die!" Chris screamed pointing at the 'Mech. "Alright, I'll do it!" Tails yelled. He aimed the gun, and fired. A blue flash appeared and the Goliath stopped. Didn't slow down, it stopped. It hung with one foot in the air. Without the other foot, the behemoth crashed down and burst into flames. "What did you do to it?" Chris asked, awed. "I don't know. It just stopped in its tracks. I did it, I killed someone." He sunk to his knees. "Tails. It's alright." Sally said, "we would've been killed if you hadn't done what you did." "But I killed him!" Tails said, looking at her. A deep look of pity in his eyes. Chris sighed. "Johnson, relieve him of his weapon." Sarge nodded. "OK, son, give me the gun." Tails complied, throwing him the weapon as if it had a plague on it. "Lets keep moving. Still have an IFF on those Marines?" Chris asked. "No sir. After Tiggs went down, the IFFs went dead. We lost them." Tails said shivering as a chill went down his spine. "That means we're next." Sonic said. "We have to get out of here." Chris said. "Everyone's dead and we might be going with them if we don't hurry."

"USCA selected, commander" a pilot responded. "Greetings, pilot." The commander responded. "We have our fugitives on the loose. Would you do the pleasure of tracking them down and exterminating them?" "Acknowledged, HQ, NavCom locked." The Goliath lumbered. Two Vulture hovercycles brought up the rear.

Sonic served as the Recon trooper. He sped ahead and looked around intersections that might be suitable choke points. "All clear!" He yelled after inspecting the last one with two side turned trucks. "Bring it up, Marines!" Chris said, motioning them forward. OK, this is it." The unit sprinted toward the outer reaches of the city. Two minutes later, the Florida heat wore off, leaving them flash cooled. "Shake it off." The captain called.

"OK, our priority is to take down those anti air defenses. With those down, we can get transport to the \_Dedalus\_. Tails radio a Blackhawk to pick us up." The fox gave him a thumb up. "On it, sir." And he went to work on his laptop. "Blackhawk 8 this is Specialist Miles Prower from Alpha Company." The Blackhawk pilot replied, "Roger that, Prower. We are on station in the \_Dedalus\_. I'm Sergeant Dhans." "OK, Sir, my team requests a pickup at our position." Dhans was silent, and then said. "Prower, this area is creeping with anti air turrets,

it'll take a crazy man jumped up on stims to go in there." "I agree, Sergeant, but can you do a dust-off after we neutralize the turrets in the area?"

Dahns replied. "Sure thing, we can lift you off only if those turrets are down." Tails nodded, roger that, Sergeant, Miles Prower out." He turned to Chris, "We need to take out those air defenses to let the helicopters pick us up." Chris nodded. "OK, we need to act fast. Who has the explosives? Chaz?" Chaz laughed and lifted his hand, a few C12 plastic explosives were nestled in their vacuum sealed packages. Then, the team set off for the turrets.

The hike from the city didn't take too long. The team reached the first anti air battery within an hour. "OK" Chris said gesturing to his team. We want to find the main power plant. Lets wait a minute while the princess gets a signal. Sally took out a small hand held computer. "Hey, Sal." Ryan said. "Yeah?" she asked brushing hair away from her eyes. "That computer" the computer then spoke: "My name is Nicole!" Ryan and Chris jumped. "It speaks!" Carl said with wide eyes. "What were you expecting? Stand-up comedy?" Sally asked sarcastically. "Yeah," Ryan said. "So where'd you get it?" Sally considered. "It was a gift." Ryan was suspicious. "From who?" he asked with a raised eyebrow. "It was a gift from myself." Chris shook his head. "What the hell does that mean?" Sally looked up. "You wouldn't understand." Chris put his free hand on his hip. "Any more than I do now?" Sally scoffed. "Shut up." She said shaking her head. Sally was the only humanoid lower in rank that said shut up to Chris. Older sergeants with 20 years of Military training tried it with him. Chris's "special weapon" only witnessed by Knuckles set in. Chris may be young and small, but he could sure clean that sergeant's clock. With the penalty of a months worth KP. "OK, I have something." Nicole droned. "Show me." Sally said into the build in microphone. A 3D map shot up a few feet, showing a 100-mile area, a blue dot signified the current position. The red dot showed their objective. "Sal, I have contacts moving to our position." Sally selected an orange blob; it was a group of Vulture Hoverbikes and a Goliath Walker. "Let's move!" she urged.

A huge building appeared, the suns were well behind the mountain and cast a cold, ghostly shadow on the power plant. "God in heaven, it's freezing!" Sonic whined. "Shut it." Chris warned. "Frostbite won't be your only enemy if you don't keep quiet." Sonic mumbled something under his breath that contained three bad words. "OK, let's breach the building!" Chris ordered. The soldiers lined up along the wall. Tails traced Thermite along the door's outer edge. "Burn it!" Chris yelled. Tails lit a flare and set the line ablaze, the door fell forward and gunfire whizzed by. Tails flew out of the way when bullets pierced the spot where he had been. Chris tossed a FlashBang into the room. There was a flash and yells of pain. The Terrans shielded their eyes with giant hands. Ryan fired bursts of fire into the room at the blinded men. Bullets pierced the armor. The armor clanked as it hit the floor. Sally punched a Terran in the face, the fist went through his helmet, Sally shoved a smoke grenade through the hole. The bang went off, and poisonous fumes leaked out of the hole. The Terran, unable to do anything, breathed in the gasses and passed out. "Good work, guys." Chris said. "Sonic, you have demo duty." He said, handing Sonic a few vacuum packages of C12 High Explosive. Sonic was gone in a jiffy. "Zip," he said, attaching an explosive to a generator. "Zap," he said as the second package sent on a computer console. And "Zop!" he finished, sticking the last of

the C12 on a quartet of Propane tanks. "We have 10 seconds!" Sally yelled, eyeballing the countdown timer. "Book it!" Carl yelled. The unit vanished as quick as the words came. Five. They passed the doors. Four. They were racing. Three. Only a few more feet left. Two. "TAKE COVER!" Johnson yelled. One. They had just started to go prone when, KABOOOOOMMM!!! The C12 ignited. The trio explosions mixed with the propane, electricity and all consumables, created an explosion large enough to knock everyone off their feet for five yards. Even at this length the heat was enough to roast marshmallows. The snow was slushy. "Wow, what a blast!" Sally said "No pun intended, thank you very much." Sonic looked like he saw a ghost. "I think I wet myself." He said blushing. "Really?" Knuckles asked. Tails scoffed nearby. "No, of course I didn't." Sonic said, his eyes darting from side to side. "Lets get to the \_Daedalus\_, guys. The Terrans are going to be sending a welcoming committee, my guess is that they aren't going to be so friendly after we took out their AA guns."

### 13. Chapter 13 Mecha Mecha Hai

#### Chapter 13: Mecha Mecha Hai

September 15th 3235 1250 h

En Route to \_Dedalus\_

Sergeant Major Sally Acorn Mission Log

\Begin Entry\

Well, it's going to be a long walk. Chris seems worried about something, but what? I think even for a pure human, he seems to have animal instincts, unlike Ryan who does first, thinks 2 hours later. My feet are going to blistered after this, first thing I do as soon as I get back is get a foot massage and a trip to the spa, bliss.

Getting back to the matter at hand. We managed to bring the Power Station down, all thanks to Sonic. The Terrans will get about to fixing it. That'll allow us to slip into the mountains and take off again. Time to go home.

\End Entry\

"Any higher and the air will freeze." Sonic said, his boots sinking into the snow. "Are you sure that this is the RV?" Chris turned to look at the hedgehog. "Yeah it is. They should be coming any second now. As if by magic, twin helicopter rotors filled the cold air. Above them, UH-90 Blackhawk transport/Combat copters fell out of the sky. The powder was blasted into the units' faces as the twin rotors touched down. "Get aboard!" The pilot yelled. "And make it quick! We have company!" gauss shells screamed from a distance, stripping a tree of its lower branches. "Double-Time it, Marines!" Johnson urged. Chris got into the second helicopter, sitting on the ledge. "Boot it, guys!" he yelled. The blackhawks rose into the air, dodging gunfire. The pilot thumbed a hellfire missile release. A plume of smoke raced toward an advancing group of Terrans. An explosion blossomed and the Terrans were thrown back down the mountain. The helicopters rose over the mountain, safe at last. Chris pulled himself inside and closed the troop door. The humans were in this helicopter.

"What's our ETA on the LZ?" Sally asked the human pilot. The man checked the speedometer. "About fifteen minutes at our current speed." "Excellent." The princess said. Sally walked into the troop bay where the Mobians were sitting. "Well, what's going on?" Sonic said, kicking his feet up on the seat. "Well, we're a short ride from the \_Dedalus\_. We should be able to heat up the engines and get to safety within an hour after that." Knuckles nodded. "Cool." Tails seemed content as well. "As soon as I get back, I can finally update my blog." Sonic scoffed. "You have a blog?" "Yeah, I put all of my invention notes, travel logs, and just how cool everything is. You should check it out sometime." Sonic rolled his eyes. "Let's not and say we did."

Up ahead, Larry was seated in the primary communications booth. "Are they coming?" Gerry asked, sipping a cup of bitter coffee. "They should. The blackhawks left twenty-five minutes ago. Hang on. I have the helicopters' ID tags. They're coming!" Larry said, zooming in on the green blips. "And it looks like they have company." Gerry said, pointing to red blips indicating the Goliaths and Vultures. "Ok, let's get the man's 'Mech ready!" the techs slapped alarms and the men and women on the bay's floor sped to work preparing the metal behemoths. On deck Mechwarriors readied their helmets. Suited up, and filed to their vehicles.

"Ok, I have the dropship in sight, sir." The pilot called. The sphere of the Union-Class dropship beckoned ahead. "Nearly there!" then, his copilot tapped his shoulder. "What is it, Beadly? Oh boy." He said, noticing the approaching missiles. "Hang on back there! I knew it was going to be a bad day."

The missiles hit. The shaped charges slammed through the windshield and blew the front of the helicopter right off. The chassis started to spin out of control as the surviving marines started to fall to their deaths. All of the men screamed as their ship slammed into the powder. Save for a few cuts and bruises, they all survived. Ryan crawled out and let the snow fall on to his face. "If God's listening right now, tell him I love him." Chris came out next. "We not through this. Look what fired those missiles." He pointed downrange. A squad of Goliaths came toward them, and a file of Vulture Hoverbikes. "Where'd they come from?" Carl asked. "I think they hooked up with a unit looking for us." The captain answered. "We need to get inside!" the squad raced to the \_Dedalus\_'s hull, through a large pressure door where they entered the alarm painted Mech Bay. Chris was greeted by his fellow Mechwarriors. "Hey Captain. I hope you didn't get frostbite out there." A smart mouthed Lieutenant shot sarcastically. "You boys have no idea. Lets get suited up." The Mechwarriors sprinted down the walkway, trucks and techs scurried out of the way. A resulting blast shook the dropship, she then listed to port. Some cargo containers got loose and swatted two Warriors down to the central shaft. Their bodies connected and their spines shattered. Chris cursed under his breath. His eyes darted back in forth in deep thought. Then, he came to a decision. "Tails! Sarge! Get over here!" he shouted to the group of soldiers. "Call for us, sir?" Johnson growled hopefully. "Two Mechwarriors are down for the count, I need some replacements." A wide smile split Johnson's face. "That's what I'm talkin' about!" he crowed. "Tails you have an Uziel. Grab a helmet from the rack and climb in." Tails nodded, "Ok, but I'm not sure about this." "Tails." Chris started, but a female pilot shouted: "Sir, those Terrans will breach the outer hull if we don't get out of

here!" Chris nodded. "Give me a second." She shook her head. "Step on it, sir!" "Tails. We need to get out of here to warn Mobius." And to do that, we need to hold them off until the system's check is complete." Tails nodded. "I just don't want to hurt anybody anymore." Chris smiled a little. "Neither do I but these guys are threatening both of our worlds. Lets just stall them and hurry out of here." "Ok," Tails said, slipping on the helmet. "Sir!" the woman called again. "I'm coming!" Chris called back.

Chris's Vulture stood ahead. Larry and Gerry stood in front of the Heavy Mech. "Ready to kick some Terran metal behind, sir?" Chris chuckled. "Always ready. How are the PPCs doing?" Larry checked a datapad. "They should take. Watch it though. Those two are your strongest offence. LRM 40s in the shoulder pods can be used as a backup as well." "Thanks boys." Chris said, putting on his helmet and adjusting the mike. "Well," Johnson said stepping up, a wide smile stretching across his face as he stood in the Mechwarrior outfit. "How do I look?" Chris folded his arms. "You look like you've seen too many Robotech movies." Johnson laughed and lit a cigar. "I feel so alive!" I haven't felt this pumped since Halo!" Chris smiled and pointed into the next berth. "That's your weapon." The Mad Cat. The sergeant let out a slow, long whistle. "God in Heaven!" Chris clapped the Sergeant on the shoulder. "Enjoy it, buddy."

Inside the cockpit, Tails seated himself. His tails right behind him. His safety belt clipped on. This was nothing like the Tornado. The dials were in different places, more like a fighter plane than a robot. Weapon readouts and heat control, more like piloting a walking power plant. "Ok, lets boot her up." Chris's face appeared onscreen. Tails jumped at his face. "Hey, man. Follow along on my start up procedures. The rest should be cake." "Sure thing." Tails replied giving him the thumbs up. Chris told Tails to open up the fuel pipes to allow energy to flow to the reactor turbine. The reactor would govern the control of the Mech. The switches on the front left were to disperse the power to other sections of the robot. Flipping those switches, a readout showing the Mech shone green, data coursing through the readout. "Ok, I'm green." Johnson nodded. "Ditto on that, sir."

"Ok, throttle's on the left, joystick on the right. The pedals at your feet are used to control the torso direction." "Roger." Tails said, flicking the captain a thumbs-up. "Lets move it out, gentlemen!"

The vulture exxited first. Chris opened his throttle to 35kph to clear the launch bay. As soon as the blast door was dropped, machine gun fire shot through. Chris activated his LRM system. TARGET(S) ACQUIRED. "Dodge this." He laughed. Missiles cleared the launch tubes and streaked toward the targets. The vultues, egar t get away, had no AMS on them. So, the milles impacted on them. A few blew through the chasis, crippling or destroying the Goliaths. Johnson laughed as bullet shells rained from his autocannons. The high calibur slugs chopped through Goliaths and Vulture bikes. Tails, however, was more interested in disabling the Terrans. Well placed machine gun shots broke the legs off of Goliaths and blew up missiles still in the tubes, Thier arms and legs useless, the pilots had to abandon thier useless walkers. Chris PPCs discharged and incinerated a pair of Vulture Hoverbikes. Thier forms bulged, then exploded outward, raining molton, electrified metal into the snow. "Sir, I need some help!" a Mechwarrior called. The Cougar 'Mech was overwhelmed by

three Goliaths, firing simultaneously at key locations. Chris was just turning about when the Goliaths blew holes into the reactor. The 'Mech turned blinding white. An ejection pod sailed out of the head cavity and rocketed skyward. The Cougar went nuclear and exploded. The blast sent shockwaves for over fifty feet, frying a squad of Vulture bikes and disintegrating the Goliaths who blew it up.

"I hope he got out OK." Tails said, magnifying the vision to see the pod in detail. A machine gun burst deflecting off of the rounded shoulder caught his attention. "Oh yeah?" he inquired. "Cease and desist actions!" the goliath pilot hailed. "Fat chance." He thumbed the firing studs and sent a flurry of missiles into the Goliath interlopers. The legs blew off and the chassis went skyward. "That'll teach you!" he called to the descending cockpit. It crunched as the snow absorbed the impact.

"Stay still dammit!" Johnson said to the moving Vulture bikes. "They're like cockroaches!" "Mine!" a hispanic Mechwarrior said over the Comm. "Sorry, \_amigo\_, maybe you'll get it next time." A few missiles streaked toward the hoverbikes. Connected, and blew them halfway to hell. "You'll get yours." Johnson vowed. "Sorry Sergeant, but not today." The captain's voice said over the Comm. "I just got word from the \_Dedalus\_. We're pulling out. The engines are red hot, systems are green and we're finding the best charter flight out of system we can." He said, with a bit of sarcasm in his voice. "OK, I'll make best speed back to the ship when I..." He didn't finish. He couldn't. Not with the gigantic BattleCruiser in front of his view.

"Oh, sugar, honey, ice tea." Chris said, his eyes wide in fear. "Book it back to the ship!!" He yelled to anyone who was on the channel. "Don't have to tell me twice." Tails said, pushing throttle to 80kph. The battle cruiser's point defense shot at the ground. A Shadow Cat was an unfortunate victim who met the business end of a laser beam, the Mech was cut in half and flopped over, bleeding fluids and reactor coolant. "We'll never make it!" a Mechwarrior keyed in. Chris was starting to sweat uncontrollably, yet the climate control was 79 degrees Fahrenheit. A small ball of orange light formed in front of the BattleCruiser. "That can't be good." Johnson said, his voice cracking from strain. Under normal circumstances, Chris would laugh. He felt like crying now. Just then, the familiar screams of engines flew overhead: A pair of C709 Longsword bombers! The fighter/bombers aligned themselves and released their payload of Shiva Nuclear tipped warheads. The Longswords arced and flew backwards. On the side there was a picture of a ringed planet. Behind it was a pair of eagle wings, the symbol of FlightSquad 98. It was Everly. "Major!" Chris called over the Comm. "How you doing, Ground-Pounder?" came the Major's voice. "Stand back and watch out for some fireworks!" the BattleCruiser was highlighted in white. The windows blew out and the front of the ship blasted apart completely. Secondary explosions dotted the back and ignited the fuel for the engines. The Terran vessel disappeared from visible view, never to be seen again. "Nice drop, sir." Chris said. "Thank you, son." Chris got back to the question on his mind. "Sir! You're alive!" The Major sighed. "Expertly noted, Marine." Chris cocked an eyebrow, knowing the Major couldn't see, though. "How?" The Longswords touched down and the Major stepped out. Chris, Tails and Johnson parked the "Mechs and met the flier. "Long story." After you guys discharged from the \_Indomitable\_ my task force was ordered to protect the ship while Andsworth navigated toward the shipyards of the moon." Chris asked.



"Is he OK?" Everly nodded. "Yeah, he's alive. I don't know if anyone's OK, down here." Chris looked at the ground. "Aside from us, I don't think anyone's still alive." Everly swore. "Christ." He said. "Well, not much we can do except get up there and get back to Earth. I'll get the guys ready." Everly marched back up the ramp into the C709's cockpit. Its belly jets lifted it off the ground. The second followed suit. The 'Mechs were parked moment later. Chris, Johnson, and Tails rode an elevator to the command deck. "That was a great fight! Sonic said, giving the three a thumbs up. "On more than one occasion I thought you guys were done for." Carl said. Lance and Chaz nodded. "Yeah me too." Ryan said leaning on the railing. "Sir, we have an agenda to keep up with," Gerry said, standing beside the captain. "Frankly, time stands still for no man." Chris nodded. "Ok, lets get this crate lifted off.

"Ok, lift us off." Larry commanded engine officers. "Ok, engines responding at 115 Prepare for a rocky ride." The sudden acceleration forced the standing occupants to bend their knees slightly. "We have company! The scanner officer replied. Chris looked at the scanner. "That's not good."

Outside, small Terran fighters, or "Wraiths" swarmed around the dropship, threatening to take them to the ground. They were way too high for the hull to absorb the impact. "Get to the gunnery stations!" Gerry told them. "Chris, who wasn't accustomed to taking orders from anybody lower ranking besides Sally, decided to go as instructed. The Simulators gave soldiers who didn't possess experience on one subject or another the chance to train for real-life situations, for example, protecting your dropship from being blown out of the sky by fightercraft. Chris sat in the control interface. Sonic sat beside him, each commanded turrets on opposite sides of the ship. "Let's get 'em" Sonic said, grinning menacingly at Chris. "Bet you I'll get more kills than you do!" Chris said, grinning back. "We'll see." Sonic said, turning on the screen. A crosshair appeared and the Wraiths buzzed around like insects. Humanity had only developed plasma weapons from stolen Covenant technology but not much after that, needless to say, they weren't perfect. The human fired off a burst. The laser streaked towards a Wraith. Direct hit. The weapon burned a hole through the ship and it drifted down, it disappeared from peripheral vision. The two then picked other targets. Ore laser blasts, more kills. "Man, I rock at this!" Sonic chuckled, blasting a Wraith to debris. "This isn't a game, soldier." Chris said, firing off. A blip appeared on radar. "Is it a plane?" Sonic looked. "Yeah," he checked again. "Human." The hedgehog answered. It was painted a dull green, armed to the teeth with Anti-Air, Air to Air, Air to Ground, rotary cannons, the works. It was a VH-69 "HavHawk" fighter. Only one was in action in this sector and that belonged to one man. "Hi, Chris!" a gruff, tough male responded over the Comm. "Ryan!" Chris exclaimed. "I didn't see you launch!" he laughed over the radio. "I free fell for a while. I wanted to surprise them." And surprised them he did. Ryan fired a 80mm Humming missile from his left wing. "Fire one." He chimed. The missile read: '\_From Ryan With Love\_' the charge splattered into a fighter and blew it away. Another missile slid down from the fuselage to take the place of the recently fired one. "You know what?" Sonic asked Chris. "I think we should sit this one out." He finished kicking up his feet. "Count me out." Chris growled hammering away at the Terran fighters. Dark blue turned to black, stars filled the screen. The Wraiths turned and fled. Ryan mowed one down with his 90mm rotary cannons. Its burning hulk falling back into the atmosphere of Alpha Centauri II.

"We won!" Sonic said.

Up ahead, the one thing that made all of the men and women on the \_Dedalus\_ any safer was nestled in an orbital shipyard: The \_Indomitable\_. Her hull shimmering in the Centaurian sunlight. "I'll be." Ryan crackled. "she's beautiful repaired." Chris nodded. "She sure is. Land in the bay and meet us in debriefing." Ryan nodded. "Yessir, Percy out."

## 14. Chapter 14 Ship Sweet Ship

### Chapter 14: Ship, Sweet Ship

September 15th 3235 1345h

UNSC \_Indomitable\_ Docking arm 3, Robert-Galayal shipyards,

Ceta Centauri

Captain Christopher James Vennettilli Soldier's Log

\Begin Entry\

I never thought I would ever see this place again. I missed the ship ever since we were launched away from it; despite the truth that it was only a couple days. I'm surprised that most of the damage that the newly classified "Yamato" Cannons, that the Terrans fired, has been repaired. All breaches have been plugged, and we got some reserve naval personnel from the moon to help us out on the journey home. I just can't accept the fact that only a handful of hundreds of Marines, navy personnel and flyboys are left. Only thing we can do now is try to make the trip home. There's the docking alarm, logging out.

\End Entry\

The locks thumped as the \_Dedalus\_'s airlocks aligned with the Supercarrier's docking arm. Atmosphere hissed and the gates were opened. The main launch bay of the \_Indomitable\_ came into view. New techs scurried about. Most at legal drafting age, eager to work in their new post. The remaining Mechwarriors on the dropship guided their vehicles into the ship's main Mech hubs. They powered down, and got ready for debriefing.

"Feels good to be back, huh guys?" Sally asked, breathing in the air, as if holding her breath for years. "Tell you the truth, it didn't matter to me that much." Knuckles said, rolling his eyes. "A ship's a same ship." Chris cocked an eyebrow at this. "Actually, each ship is different." "How so?" Tails asked, interested in this. "Aside from the name, all UNSC ships are unique. One may have more Archer pods, on a higher AU per gallon-that's intergalactic highway AUs by the way- some may even have a bigger bathroom space than another. Sally whispered, "I wish they'd put a bathtub in this ship." longingly.

This conversation had somehow lasted all the way to the debriefing room where Andsworth was waiting for them. He had a bandage to his temple soaked through with clotted blood. He smiled at their sight. "Welcome back lady and gentlemen. Everyone ok?" Tails piped up. "My

scratches are healing OK." Chris winced, touching his hand tenderly. "I could be better." Andsworth nodded. First off, I'm sorry to hear that we lost so many good men down there. We were caught blindsided in this event. But on the plus side, we have gained valuable information about the Terrans, thanks to Mr. Prower, therefore, I'm promoting him to Corporal." The squad clapped loudly. Carl even whistled. Tails smiled fully, Johnson patted the fox on the back. Secondly, I saw your advance out of the atmosphere, Captain. I have to say, I'm impressed with your antics. As for Percy," he gestured to Ryan. "I saw his flying and I have to say, You are one freaking maniac!" Ryan looked down at his feet. "Good show." Andsworth finished chuckling, "I'm awarding him the Marine Combat Service medal." Claps, and compliments followed for him too. Now: to business. We've intercepted several Terran communication signals referring to an invasion fleet to Earth. We don't know the full extent of just what these ships can do. I've had some help determining where they were going. A woman appeared next to the Admiral. She was translucent. Data was scrolling up and down her body. And her skin tone changes hues constantly, and her 'hair' was cropped short at the bangs. "Terra!" Ryan said, delighted to see his beloved AI again after months. "I thought I lost you!" Terra smiled. "I knew you'd find me sooner or later." She said. "Anyway, I picked up some radio transmissions telling several ships about an invasion on Earth. My scanning frequencies picked up at least thirty open channels, and how many \_they \_transmitted to, I'll never know." Chris sighed. "So we have an unconfirmed number of hostiles heading for the heart of humanity." Andsworth nodded. "Essentially correct, Captain." So, I have once again, another mission for you.

Sally stood up. "Admiral, with all do respect, we just spent a few days in that little patch of frozen hell, we need some time to retaliate." The senior officer nodded. "Well, said, your Highness, although here's the rub: I need you to infiltrate a Terran vessel and take it down. You may use any means necessary to destroy it." "Which brings me to my next question:" Chris said. "We have no weapons, just some Terran guns and salvaged armor parts." Andsworth said, "With those guns, we can experiment on what makes them tick, the armor we can integrate into our current armor models. As for the guns you need," Andsworth walked to a computer terminal, tapped a few buttons, and waited. Suddenly, a crest appeared, a symbol of three gigantic stars each twinkling, in the center stood the letters OT: OmniTech. "Good afternoon, Stuart." Andsworth said into a microphone at the base of the screen. Stuart Labute's face appeared. "Good afternoon Admiral. I assume you're ready for the order to be transferred?" Andsworth nodded, "Sure thing. How soon will you be able to send it over?" Stuart made calculations: "Within a minute." Andsworth looked back at the confused unit. "Teleportation. He's been working on it for a while. Not a public thing, select few know about it." The humans and Mobians nodded, understanding, well, mostly anyway. "Wait, don't you need a receiving end to make a teleportation transfer?" Tails asked. "Quite correct, Tails." Stuart said nodding. "However, my computers are in fact capable of making one-way transfers. I can simply beam the weaponry right into that room like that." A circle of light appeared in the center of the briefing room. Atoms building up until crates of guns, explosives and armor were sitting, perfectly solid. Andsworth nodded, satisfied, lifting a M7D HE 40x9mm 44. Magnum into his side holster. "The charges will be deducted from the UNSC account, you don't mind?" Stuart asked. "Not at all." Andsworth said. "Excellent doing business with you, visit us in the Doran Super-cluster some time. "I'm giving all of you guys VIP access, that

isn't common, also." The entire unit said goodbye. "Doran Super-cluster," Chris said, reaching down deep. "Isn't that where the UNSC made a ship graveyard? Said that the radiation would be mulled out in there, but that's such a dense place, no way to get in without being crushed by gravitational forces." "Looks like he found a way." Sonic said. "He's smart enough to make something to equalize the gravity so he could build his ship or station or whatever's in there." Sally hefted a MA7B assault rifle, loaded it, slung it over her shoulder. She picked up a 50-caliber sniper rifle, picked up a magazine, slapped it in, and cocked it. The first bullet slipped into the polished and oiled chamber."

"Smarty-pants knows his stuff, the rifle works like a dream, light-weight too." Tails considered it. "Probably Polymer Thylon. A lightweight material used to make superstructures, very tough, but light-weight, like Titanium." Andsworth nodded. "Now that we're all loaded up, its time to choose who will go. All who wants in raise your hand." Chris's palm shot up instantly, the Admiral smiled, Johnson went too, Ryan followed, surprisingly, Carl, Lance, and Chaz wouldn't go. "Sorry sir, recent events apply" Chaz said, speaking for Carl. His injury made him startlingly weak. Sonic too was out. Tails needed to stay and work on the Terran weaponry recovered from the planet. All of the Mobians declined the mission except Sally. "I'm coming with you guys." She said stepping into the small group. "If there's one thing I've learned over this trip, its to always be a leader, no a follower. Sonic refused and that's telling me that he's not a strong leader. Give him a spacesuit and a gun, and he'll bawl like a baby."

A D77-TC Pelican was prepped for the emergency mission. Sally at the pilot controls. Chris was in the back with Johnson and Ryan. "We know what to do, right?" he asked the men. "Yeah, get the size of the fleet, plant explosives, and book it out of that place." Johnson said. "Correct. Not a difficult mission, so, plenty of opportunities. Just don't do anything that could result us in getting shot, stabbed, or ejected into interstellar space." "We'll try not to." Sally said from the cockpit. She sealed the rear hatch and the Inner door cycled open. She guided the dropship inside the lock. The air hissed as it was pumped out of the area. The Outer door opened soundlessly in the vacuum. Ceta Centauri shone as water reflected the sunlight. Chris would've liked it to see the beautiful surface, and be warm. There was a sudden acceleration as the Pelican sped away from the Supercarrier's hull. Gravity started to weaken half a kilometer later. The marines floated but were then brought down by the acceleration of the dropship. "Big question: Where is the Terran ship?" Sally asked the guys in the back. They all gaped and pointed ahead. Sally gasped as she saw it too. The ship appeared out of nowhere. "Stealth technology." Chris noted. "Have they spotted us?" Sally checked the scanners. "Either they don't know we're here or they just don't care. Personally, I prefer number two." "Is there an open shuttle bay?" Sally checked again, this time, checking Nicole. "Yeah, Bay Three. Seems unused, no life signs."

Sally eased the Pelican into the alien bay, "Come on, steady, girl." She urged the machine. The landing gear thumped on the metal. "We're good. We should move out before they ask for ID." Johnson nodded, slapping a clip into the BR75 Battle Rifle.

A voice from an intercom spoke: "Attention, ship shall be warping in thirty seconds."

"Warp? What's that?" Ryan said. "Ever watch Star Trek, Marine?" Johnson asked Ryan. "No, I watched Farscape." Johnson said, "What?! Anyways, Warp was the Faster than Light travel in that universe. My guess is that the Terrans have a Warp drive as well." Chris smiled. "Very good, Johnson, have a gold star." Johnson laughed. At once, the stars began to streak as the ship ploughed into warp space.

Back on the \_Indomitable\_, There was a problem. "Status, Terra!" Andsworth demanded as the ship listed to port. "I'm detecting a Faster than Light signature. It appears to be coming from a Terran ship stationed in system. It appears that we're getting pulled into its wormhole!" Andsworth cursed. "Can you take us out?" He asked a helmsman. "Negative, sir. Even if we push the engines to overload, there's no way to escape."

Andsworth swore again. "So we're getting dragged along for the ride." Terra nodded. "Yes, sir. We are the proverbial wake boarders getting dragged along by a boat in this lake." The stars streaked and bright colors enveloped the Supercarrier as they accelerated into warp. "I'll be. Look at this. I hope Prower is getting this." Terra chimed in. "Sir, based on what the other ship's system says, I assume that we'll read our destination within a twelve hours. "That's fast." Andsworth whistled. "Yes sir, but we have no idea where we're going." Andsworth nodded. "That's true. Lets hope that those four can blow that ship up just as soon as we get to that destination.

"Everyone OK?" Chris asked, he grabbed Sally's hand and pulled her up. "Thanks." She responded. "Any time." He said back. "Ok, let's make our way to the bridge." Chris said. We should get there by moving through the spine of the ship. We appear to be in the midway point. The Marines cocked their guns and proceeded to move through the ship.

About twenty minutes later, Sally noticed something. "Chris this is the brig. Not the bridge." She said shaking her head. "Ok, so I don't know my way around a Terran ship." He admitted. Ryan shook his head. "That's sad, Chris, real sad." Johnson snapped him up. "You'd better watch what you say around the captain." Ryan gulped and fixed an imaginary jam on his rifle. "You know, I haven't seen a single Terran on this ship ever since we got on." Sally noticed. "Yeah, you're right. I think something's real wrong." None of them noticed a shimmer of air right behind them hit an alarm switch.

"You, Earthling, come here." A voice rasped. Chris turned to see the voice. It was a man, mid aged and sitting in an energy cell. A force field kept him boxed in. "Help me out, Earthling." Chris looked at the man. "I'm Captain Vennettilli of the UNSC. Are you a citizen of the United Earth Government?" the man shook his head. "No, I'm from Tarsonis, one of the Terran planets of origin." Chris said mockingly. "Oh good, more friends. Explain something to me. Why would the Terrans box up their own citizens?" Chris said to the man. "Because I'm part of the UED, or what's left of it, anyway."

Johnson cocked an eyebrow. "The UED?" he asked suspiciously. "The United Earth Directorate, an organization founded in the 26th century." Chris thought. Sally chimed in. "There's no record of a UED in the Earth Chronological Databases." The man spoke up. "It was a secret organization funded by the government to stop the Terran Confederacy from overrunning the sector and controlling Earth. The

original members consisted of a few ships, but by the end of the campaign, the numbers increased to planets! However, after this, I doubt neither of our governments will be left standing, and a Terran Empire will rise." "A Terran Empire?" Sally considered. "That doesn't sound good." "You're telling me!" Johnson said. "I thought the Covenant were our only problem. An Empire. That's different. I'll need a lightsaber, a giant monkey, and a snooty little kid that'll join the dark side." Everyone looked at Johnson. The Sergeant pulled off his hat, took a look around, turned a shade of red, and pulled a cigar out of it, he had for more in loops on the roof. He lit it and puffed once. "He heh, so I watched Star Wars a little too much." He said. Sally looked at the sergeant for a while. "You're a nerd." She said

"Almost got them online: there we go!" Terra said in deep concentration. Words flickered onscreen. A written document of the jump orders. "Admiral, listen to this." She said after reading the message a few times in a second. The AI cleared her nonexistent throat and said:

10.15.35 1300h

TCS \_Extravagant\_

Fleet Commander Alexi Adrekov Issuing

Greetings fellow Terrans:

It pleases me to report that the Earthlings that we encountered earlier have been dealt with. Their air supplies are rapidly leaking and there is no way that the ship's surviving crew could survive. I commend them though, even though we despise them for sending us to the far reaches of the galaxy. They may have given the Terrans birth but they are the enemy. Thanks to their galactic maps found on their pitiful ship that we encountered on the fringes of their space, at the colony they called New Michigan. After we destroyed the ship, we razed the planet. Millions dead, it was a sight to behold. But don't stray from my words, comrades. The maps on their ships have revealed to us the location of their homeworld: Terra, Earth. The site of creation of the human race will be in Terran hands by the end of this twelfth month. I swear this to you, set these coordinates into your warp drives as soon as possible: X: 0 Y: 0 Z: 0

You know your orders, Fleet Commander Andrekov, out.

The bridge officers stood frozen. They had not been expecting this. The Galaxy was divided into three axes: X-axis, Y-axis, and Z-axis. Vertical, Horizontal, and Diagonal. Triple Zero was the center of all jump routes. The Terrans were heading for Earth. Cole Protocol didn't apply since they weren't the Covenant, however, they might not have gotten the chance to purge the systems before the ship they attacked was cracked in two. Either way, there was no way to contact the Admiralty from FTL space. So all they could do was sit there and wait for their inevitable slaughter. Andsworth sat in the command chair and watched ahead as a dazzling display of color and light continuously sped toward them.

Back on the Terran ship, Chris traced a string of Thermite along the cell wall not covered by a force field. Ryan lit a flare and sent the flames scurrying around the traced circle. The hatch was looser now.

The fire team pushed against the weakened wall and the metal fell down with a dull thud. The Terran scurried out. He was dressed in a suit that was so reminiscent to UNSC unarmored personnel, you couldn't tell the difference. "Let's get going. I didn't catch your name, Soldier." Chris said. The Terran said: "My name's Logan." The team nodded. "Logan, do you know the way to the most crucial part of the ship?" Sally asked. "Sure the engine room, You want to blow this crate up?" Johnson nodded. "That's the plan, Marine." Logan frisked his body. "I don't have a gun. And the guards took my knife." Chris reached into his side holster and drew his Desert Eagle and three clips of fifteen round ammunition. "There you go. Teflon coated bullets plus a little agent in the gunpowder developed by a friend of mine to make the bullets go one and a half times the speed of sound. It'll crack though Terran armor." Logan examined the handgun. "Amazing you possess such antique weaponry." Chris nodded. "The UNSC re-introduced a lot of 21st century weaponry since they were too good to give up, such as an AK-47 or an M16, even a Desert Eagle or a Five-sevenN." Sally tapped her side holster. "I carry a .357" She smiled. "Cool." Logan said and slipped a clip into the receiver. It clacked and he pulled back the cocking lever to make the first hybrid round slip into the chamber. "Let's move out!" Chris said.

The light stopped. Andsworth looked out of the viewport. The sapphire orb of Earth hung in all her glory straight ahead, a few million kilometers starboard fore, the rocky globe of the moon beckoned, then as if by magic, over fifty Terran vessels stretched into real space. "Mother of God." Andsworth gasped. There was no way the Indomitable could hold out against a fleet that size. Even with Home Fleet on Red Alert. And the MAC stations on Overcharge. There was still no way to win. "Sir," Velo chimed. "Most of the ships in the Terran fleet are headed for the dark side of the moon! It's the jumpgate!"

The Jumpgate that led to Mobius. The planet was still recovering from the war two months ago. They were sure to lose.

## 15. Chapter 15 War on Terrans

### Chapter 15: War on Terrans

September 15th 3235 1400h

Terran Fusion engines, Terran ship

"Well, here's the fusion engines for the whole ship. We light a couple matches in the right place and this thing will be blown higher than a narcotics kingpin on Charbydin X cocaine!" Chris said studying the engines. By the looks of it these engines have been in development hundreds of years ago. Understandable. Fusion was the safest and strongest power source to date. "So where do we place the explosives?" Sally asked, taking a packet of C12 out of her backpack. Logan took a datapad. "I'm detecting certain ports where the fusion energy is grouped in large masses. Also, coolant lines would present valuable targets as well since they are needed to keep the engines from overheating and exploding, since Vespene-a substance found in Terran space-is very unstable. And the whole ship will go up in flames." Chris nodded. "OK, you know your jobs, people. Move out. Ryan take that coolant line over there." He said pointing near a port ten meters away to port. Johnson: take C12 and fix it on those pipes

and override that computer console on coolant intake on the engines. "Both men nodded and set off to do their tasks. "Sally, try and override the Vespine gas control to over apply the gas to the systems, then, the Cl2 should ignite that gas, right in front of me." Sally nodded. "OK." Logan leaned over to Chris and whispered: "Any particular reason you want her to work in front of you, facing away from you?" Chris spun to him. "Are you implying something?" Logan raised his shoulders up and down, the universal sign of 'I don't know'. "I may." Chris was still looking at him with his eyes, then watched Sally work. Occasionally, his eyes would drift up and down her frame. Surveying would be the term." "Lovely figure, huh?" Logan said. Chris yelped, and pointed his rifle at Logan instinctively. "You know?" he asked in a hoarse whisper. Logan chuckled. "Please! I'm a telepath." Chris lowered the rifle. "You are? What are the odds?" Logan cocked his eyebrows. "Pretty high, actually. Most Terrans are born with Telepathic powers, some aren't. It helps." Chris nodded guiltily. "I bet it does. "Have you told her yet?" He asked, leaning on the wall. "Nah, not yet. But I think she knows." He said looking at her. "I can read minds you know." Logan said. "I think you brought that up already." Chris said, starting to get annoyed. "Well, \_sir\_, I just so happen to know what she's thinking of YOU right now!" Chris flinched. He COULD. He DOES know. What \_was\_ she thinking about him? Better not ask. "Smart move," Logan said, nodding to the captain. "It was big anyway, better you find out."

"Charges are in place!" Ryan called, cackling like a witch. "Don't thumb that detonator yet, Marine. A hole could blow out this compartment sucking us into space!" Johnson said pointing his Index finger toward Ryan and wagging it. "OK, Chris, the coolant has overloaded. Temperature is rising at 3 degrees Fahrenheit per second. Better get moving, boys." They nodded and set down the hall. "I didn't see this place. Chris said, stepping into a door, a giant viewing deck beckoned. Stars, a G2 type sun, and a sapphire orb that looks remarkably like Earth. "Oh no!" Sally screamed. "The Terrans are going to try to take over Mobius!" Sally had a point. The Terrans could attempt to take over the planet, and they most likely would succeed. The planet was severely weakened the war. "We need to get off this ship." Chris said. "I believe that's not an option." A Russian voice sounded behind them. A Terran in armor stepped toward them, a 5 star pentagon connected by lines stood on his chest, a fleet admiral, or, as Intel suggested, the fleet \_commander\_. "I am Alexi Andrekov. You are the ones attempting to stop us. Ah, hello, Logan. Has time in the cell served you well?" Logan nodes stiffly, cracking his knuckles loudly. "I've been honing my skills until I break you in two, Alex." Andrekov tsked. "Uh uh, don't be mad, little boy, you're lucky we didn't space you when we picked you up from that hulk of a freighter over Tarsonis. You should be thankful, and bow to me as your ruler." Logan shook his head. "No way." Andrekov exhaled. "I see. Well, I'm not getting anywhere here. I need to catch a shuttle, I have a planet to conquer, and this virgin world will be strip mined, processed, and destroyed to fuel our might to destroy the earthlings. "Gentlemen, please deal with our friends when I leave." Twenty armored Terrans stepped inside each had a gauss rifle. The safeties clicked off and laser sights activated. "Goodbye, comrades!" Adnrekov stepped away and the door closed, and it hissed as the seal became airtight. A sergeant stepped up and seized Sally by the front of her shirt and dragged her upwards, suspending her a full three feet above the ground. "Well lookie here, boys! It looks like this squirrel went too far from her tree. Sally's face started



to turn a shade of blue in her cheeks. "Leave her alone!" Chris yelled. He got a running start and jumped on the sergeant's back, shooting bursts into his back. The Terran screamed and released the princess. She edged away and kept close to Ryan and Johnson. Chris expended the clip into the Terran who was spilling blood. The other Terrans decided to open up, hundreds of armor piercing rounds impacted all around them. Behind them, a lone fighter patrol was arming a missile to fire at the observation center.

The Mobian fighter glided into the sunlight. The pilot keyed into the intercom. "Permission to fire on Terran battleship?" "One shot, Lieutenant. I have reason to believe that the ship is going to blow. The pilot steadied his hand on the firing stud for two FERAL 100mm AT missiles. "Missiles away!" he hammered down on the trigger and the missiles screamed away from the hull.

Johnson noticed this. "Guys!" he said pointing to the missiles. "Oh no." Sally whispered.

"Chris! Get out of there!" Ryan yelled. Chris noticed this too. He immediately stowed his rifle and ran for the door, but the Terrans wouldn't allow it. Johnson, Logan and Ryan found cover; a computer console would act as a windshield. Sally however, was pinned by fire. Chris thought, and thought. \_There's only one way, but it's crazy, suicidal!\_ But it was his only choice. Chris shot the Terran shooting at Sally. He loaded a piton dart into his gun barrel and shot it at the door. It stuck and a cement like substance in the dark held it in place. He ran over to Sally. "Grab me!" Sally, looking confused and scared, grabbed on to Chris's midsection. "Hang on, princess!" She turned to see the missiles mere meters from the window, she held on tighter and forced her face into Chris's combat uniform. The missiles struck. They blew up the glass in an explosion of yellow and orange. An instant later, a hurricane exploded inside the viewing module. The air was torn away out through the window into space where it flash-froze into ice crystals. The Terrans were lifted off their feet swearing and cursing as they flew away from the hull. Chris was being dangled on the end of the piton string like a bass trying to get away from the fisherman. He hoped the sticking substance would hold. Sally tightened her grip to avoid being sucked into space. Ryan, Logan and Johnson were frozen, watching their friends dangle on the cable, and prayed that they'd be OK.

On the command deck, a Lieutenant said. "Captain, a hull breach on deck C." The Battlecruiser captain nodded. Seal off the section, no need for our air reservoirs to get any lower. The Lieutenant nodded and pressed a button.

Three decks below, a heady bulkhead slid over the rupture, vacuum assisted, it plummeted into the floor. The howling stopped and the two were set down. Chris fell on his back, and breathed deeply. He felt his head; his hair was encrusted with frost. He wiped it off and sat up, only to be knocked down again by Sally, her head on his shoulder. "Thank you," She said, half sniffing. "For saving my life. I'm indebted to you again." Chris stood her up. "No big deal. It's my job. There'll be time for 'thank you' later. We need to get out of here!" He motioned everyone to get back to the Pelican.

Ten decks aft, the coolant reached over 7,000 degrees Fahrenheit. The engine coils have burned out and there was no escaping. Now all that was left was to detonate the C12

Back on the D77-TC Chris and Sally took their seats at the pilot and copilot chairs. Everyone else sat in the back. "These dropships are much nicer than ours." Logan said. "The Terrans didn't believe in comfort?" Ryan asked. "Not at all." The UED agent said. "We have a complication, Chris." Sally said. "What is it?" Sally said, "Well, simple, they're refusing to open the door for us." Chris actually laughed. "Is that all? Fire a salvo at those doors, they break like sugar glass. Sally exhaled. "Ok." Chris turned to the troop bay. "Ryan, thumb that detonator, Marine!" Ryan grinned and placed his thumb on the red button. He pressed it. All hell broke loose. Sally fired five missiles at one point in the door, it punched a hole big enough for the Pelican to pass through. Loose objects tumbled out due to explosive decompression. "Hang on, things are about to get hot!" They just cleared the hole when green flame erupted through the rip. "Whoa!" Ryan said peering through the port hole. "I think I'm in love." Johnson shielded Ryan's eyes. "Don't look at the light, boy. You'll be blinded!" The Battlecruiser shuddered, became enveloped in a green glow, and then exploded outwards, metal hunks rained all around the pelican. The marines cheered as the larger pieces fell into Mobius's gravity well and burnt up. Now, Sally had to see what they had done to her home.

## 16. Chapter 16 Scenes of Devistation

### Chapter 16: Scenes of Devastation

September 16th 3235 0520h

En route to surface in Pelican dropship.

The pelican pierced the low laying clouds trailing flame as it reentered the atmosphere. As bad as she was burnt by the Vespine explosion, she held together. Not a moment too soon. Holes tore in the hull taking some air away for about fifteen seconds until the Pelican flew low enough for the pressure to equalize. They barely had time to wipe the windshield when a giant hulk of blue grey accelerated towards them. Sally had time to yell "Whoa!" and jerked the yoke to the left. The Pelican did a barrel roll and made the occupants to suspend in the air when the seatbelts to keep them from flying into the overhead netting. Sally jerked the controls to make the dropship flip over while blood rushed to her head. The hulk was the largest ship in the Mobian fleet. It was a royal cruiser; its name was the Immaculate. And she truly was. Her hull was polished in chrome blue-grey. Her guns shone in their holds. She was accelerating skyward with fifteen destroyers in tow. Snub fighters broke through the clouds and followed the larger ships. One fighter came close to the Pelican. "UNSC Pelican, Identify yourselves." Chris opened the intercom. "This is Captain Christopher Vennettilli, UNSC Marine, Service number 00979-078212 CV, over?" The fighter chimed in. "Who else is aboard that dropship, sir?" The pilot replied identifying Chris as a CO. "This is Princess Sally Acorn, we have three men aboard, requesting permission for escorts to the royal airbase?" The pilot gasped as realized he was in the presence of a royal. "Yes, your highness, permission granted, I'll have two of my men accompany you to the airbase. Of the armada of fighters, two turned back. Smart choice. Two seconds later, laser fire tore into the ships above, scattering a few but engulfing a full squadron. "GET THM OUT OF HERE!" The pilot screamed to the wing mates. "Punch it,

Princess!" Chris yelled. "Buckle up, boys." She whispered, overriding the control to the afterburners. She grasped the lever and slammed it down; hybrid fuel mixed with the Pelican's regular supply and ignited the engines. The fighters, realizing they've been left behind, followed.

The escort fighters stuck to the dropship like glue. Occasionally dodging falling debris and blasting a Wraith fighter. "Those flyboys really commit!" Ryan noted. "It's because of me!" Sally explained from the cockpit. "If I wasn't royalty, they'd fly as well as a drunken Las Vegas male hooker." Johnson snorted. "That's quite an image." "Keep your eyes on the airspace." Chris told his pilot. "Sorry, \_sir\_" she said emphasizing on 'sir'.

"Incoming!" Chris said. Sally took off the safeties on the 70mm chin guns and tore a pair of Wraiths apart. "Nice shooting." Chris said. Sally smiled slightly. "You ain't seen anything yet."

The rest of the descent proceeded nicely. No more fire rained from above. The royal landing pad was straight ahead. The pad was used for VTOLS and important shuttles. About one thousand feet above it, armor piercing bullets shot up. Sally pulled the yoke up, making the Pelican do a loop de loop. Logan held his hand in front of his mouth. "Not in the ship, boy!" Johnson pleaded. The dropship evened out. Ryan unslung a rocket launcher from a weapons locker and punched open the doors. A few skyscrapers flew past; they were in the city now. Three Wraith fighters were in tow. They fired a volley of missiles but the Pelican deployed countermeasures. Ryan scoped the gun, locked on and fired. A 108mm charge flew out of its hole. It streaked toward the wraith. Impacted, and blew its wings off. The burning hulk dropped from view and impacted on a road. The second one got its cockpit blown in for its trouble. Ryan heaved the empty weapon as the last Wraith like a javelin. The heavy weapon pierced the glass and made huge cracks. The Wraith, either the pilot killed or not being able to see, fell back and disappeared. "That's for making me waste my precious ammo on you freaks!" he yelled. All Johnson could say was "Whoa." Chris pointed out a sports stadium. "There. Take us down." Sally obeyed and pointed the dropship downward the D77TC towards the open roof. She fed fuel to the belly jets and sent the ship coasting for 20 seconds. Landing gear deployed and landed on the Astroturf with a \_thump\_. The two Marines unbuckled and exited the cockpit. To their surprise, there were forces inside the stadium, but they were friendly forces. As a matter of fact, one of the marines seemed to know Sally. "Well I'll be damned! Sally, You're OK!" she said. The marine lifted her helmet up to reveal a female with the face of a rabbit. Chris had never seen her before despite all the time he spent on Mobius. "How y'all doing?" Sally embraced the rabbit. "Bunnie, you're OK!" The marines laughed. "What's so funny?" Sally asked. "It's just funny." Logan said. "Her name is Bunnie and she's a rabbit." Chris stepped in. "Wouldn't that make her Bunnie Rabbit?" Bunnie came forward. "Actually, it's Bunnie Rabbot." Johnson scoffed. "What's the difference?"

Bunnie lifted her arm and tapped it. "That. One hundred per-cent Titanium metal, boys."

"Bunnie had the honor of being roboctized." Chris cringed. Roboctization was the practice of sealing people in a metal case. Some people just got parts roboctised. "Excellent, How many men do we have?" Sally asked "Just above twenty, six in critical condition."

Sally swore. "Damn. That probably won't be enough to assault the palace." "Look who you're talking to, Sal. We're freedom fighters, we are the future, we can do anything." Bunnie nodded to the Marines. "And those guys show all the potential to kick some serious Terran ass." Johnson nodded. "That's what I'm talking about! Motivation from a woman!" Ryan scoffed. "Yeah right, the last time you got motivation from a woman, Sarge was when you were in bed the first time." "Shut up, Corporal." Ryan frowned. "Quit it, ladies, we need to gather up as much forces as we can." Chris told the men. "OK, sound off!"

"Fire!" Andsworth told Feedin. The Lieutenant agreed and shot off a MAC round. The slug screamed toward a Terran ship. The three thousand ton round pierced the ship's front and impaled it. The slug flew towards the moon and impacted on its rocky surface. Dust flew into space and a new crater formed. The ship belched atmosphere and coolant.

"Admiral, I'm detecting three dozen wraiths converging on all sides." Terra said visualizing in the Holotank. "Very well," Andsworth nodded. "Mow 'em down."

"Affirmative." The AI responded. Calculations flooded across her body and she seized control of the point defenses. All over the ship, 50mm MLA autocannons fired off rounds at the approaching snub fighters. The fighters seemed to explode outwards as the explosive rounds blew them apart. Just as soon as the debris cleared, more seemed to come. Just as quickly, the ship fired back. "We need some help, Admiral." Terra advised the admiral. "Agreed." Andsworth said. "All fighters, this is a code red, scramble all fighters!" Below deck, fighter pilots slipped on helmets, coupled atmosphere packs and ran to their C709 interceptors. Right behind them, Sonic and Tails stood behind a pillar. "I say we should get out there and earn us some credit." Sonic said. "Sonic, I already got promoted." Sonic turned to his old friend. "That's the thing! YOU got promoted. The hedgehog just got left in the dust! Come on, I'm Sonic the friggin' hedgehog. I've been here for over a year and I never even got a pat on the back!" Tails looked at Sonic. "Sonic, this is the military; you don't just get pats on the back. You take action here. I should know." Sonic saw the look. "At least let me go out there and help." Tails then said, "OK, but I'm coming too!" Sonic nodded. All the interceptors were taken, but there had to be a better way. Aha, there was a way. And it was staring them right in the face, a green tinged modified fighter bursting with weaponry. "The Hev Hawk." Sonic said, entranced by it. "Sonic, no! That's Ryan's plane!" "Yeah, so?" he asked the fox. "So, he's totally going to kill you when he finds out!" but sonic snatched the keys from a desk. "Yeah, so?"

"Sir, we've got another fighter out there!" Velo told Andsworth. "Is it one of ours?" the older man asked Jack. "Technically, sir." He keyed up the launch bay cameras. A green fighter screamed out of the bay into space. "That's the Hev Hawk, Corporal Percy's plane. Whoever's in it better have a good reason to do so." For some reason, Andsworth couldn't help but think what would happen when Ryan found out.

All the way across universes and galaxies, Ryan doubled over. Sally struggled to keep him up. "Ryan, what's wrong, man?" Ryan clutched his stomach. "Some dickhead HAS MY PLANE!"

"We are outta here!" Sonic said as the Hev Hawk exited the ship. Tails slumped in the copilot chair. He wasn't used to being way behind the wheel. "Sonic, I think that it's illegal that we allegedly stole a plane right out of a hanger. "Relax, bro. I've been stealing stuff for years." Tails shot back. "Yeah but nothing this big!" Sonic waved the fox away. "Shut up and take the gun." Tails sighed. "Oh boy here we go again, if I don't kill them, the vacuum will." Sonic turned around while flying. "Tails, if you don't do this, we'll die. Them or us." Tails sighed and turned on the gun control. On the roof, a railgun activated. A HUD appeared on a TV screen in front of Tails. A Wraith appeared. Tails squeezed the trigger. The inside of the plane turned yellow as the bolt screeched away. The explosive rail slammed into the Wraith fighter, blowing the cockpit clean away. Great shot, Tails! That was one in a million!" Sonic said. Soon after that, explosions sounded throughout the hull and an alarm screeched. "Better let me drive." Tails told Sonic. "No way, I'm good enough." But a hail of bullets shot towards the windshield and cracked it. "Oh boy." He said transferring pilot control to Tails, Get us under the atmosphere!" Sonic said clipping on the seat belt. "Hang on!" Tails yelled and slammed down the throttle. The Hev Hawk spun into space with three Wraiths in tow. "Tails they're gaining on us!" "I see em, Sonic!" Tails yelled. A UNSC Marathon Class cruiser had a hole blown through it in the shuttle bay. Explosive barrels! "Hang on, Sonic!" the Hawk banked deep and flew into the gash. Floating corpses littered the bay, Tails fired a round on a cluster of barrels. The barrels ignited and blew up dozens more creating a fireball. The Hawk exited the ship while the Wraiths were caught in the explosion. As an added bonus, the Marathon detonated and took out three battlecruisers. "Woohoo!" Sonic crowed. "Hold on, we're ready for reentry!" Tails said, raising blast shields. The Hev Hawk pounded the atmosphere of Earth. An orange hue formed around the fighter as it entered the air. Soon, it disappeared as clouds filled the view. "OK, Sonic, I checked the GPS. Welcome to New Mombasa, Kenya." "Africa?" The hedgehog asked leaning his shoes on the dashboard. "Is there any other?" The fox asked humorously. "Great, I'm looking for beaches, heat, women!" Sonic didn't finish. The sight before him made him lose words. This was New Mombasa, Kenya, but it wasn't the one they knew from Geography vids. The cityscape was on fire. Ten Terran battlecruisers lay in a clearing where civilians were being rounded up. Resistors were shot, rapidly. "What in the hell is going on here?" Sonic asked. "I don't know." Tails said. The radar beeped. "Anti-Air defenses! They found us!" Sonic grasped the dashboard and held on tight, the first energy round his and blew a wing off. The Hev Hawk spun out of control and flung toward the Millennium Orbital Elevator, the giant shaft that extended to the sky in the center of New Mombasa, the first in the world. Its name was \_The Tower of New Babel\_. That's where the Hev Hawk made her crashing landing.

"Emergency stabilizers online!" Tails demanded to the computers. The console bleeped and small wings popped out of the fighter's side. All craft had one in case of an emergency landing. "Hold together, girl." Tails begged. Sonic whined up front. "Oh God, I'm going to die, oh God!" the altimeter screamed red. "Nice knowing you, Tails." Sonic Said. Tails roared as she struggled to pull the craft up. The Hev Hawk pulverized a corner of an apartment building and impacted on a road in a smoking heap.

Hundreds of trillions of parsecs away, Ryan wept silently.

Tails coughed. He checked himself; there was blood on the windshield. He shed a tear as he realized his arm had been pierced by a shard of metal. It hurt to pull it out and the blood started to flow again. He tore a length of clothing from his uniform using his canine teeth and wrapped it around his arm. The material was soaked in blood within seconds: not a great patchjob, but it'll do." He pulled the canopy release and the explosive bolts shot the canopy off its hinges. It flew a hundred feet away where it shattered. "Sonic?" Tails asked massaging his arm. "Hey, little bro." Sonic said weakly

"Sonic!" Tails gasped realizing that most of the blood had been Sonic's. "We'll have some medics patch you up." Sonic smiled, through all his cuts and bruises. "That's what I get for taking the front seat I guess." Tails laughed. Sonic was tough even in pain. "Where does it hurt?" Tails asked. "Everywhere." He said getting to his feet. He did so shakily. "We'd better get moving." Tails said holding his friend up. "The Terrans will come and inspect the wreckage for survivors." Sure enough, there were sounds of Siege Tanks in the expanse of skyscrapers. Along with it came an inhuman screech. "What was that?" Tails asked shivering. "It's a monster." Sonic replied. Just listening to it made them scared. Tails pulled out his X38 and flicked the setting to 5. Sonic pulled out an SMG and shut off the safety. "Let them come, I'm ready." Tails turned to Sonic. "You know, that's the bravest I've ever seen you." Sonic smiled. "A crash can change a person."

## 17. Chapter 17 Smackdown!

### Chapter 17: Smackdown

September 16th 3235 0739h

Knothole Kingdom, New America, Mobius

Captain Christopher James Vennettilli Soldier's Log

\Begin Entry\

We've managed to move up from the sports stadium and capture a few districts of the city. The Terrans are enforcing the lines with tanks and Goliaths. We've taken out their cruisers in orbit and the troop movement has stopped. They don't know that yet so we'll have to play that to our advantage. After the landing we met up with Bunnie Rabbot, a sort of a cyborg Mobian. Due to the cause of Roboctization, some of her body is metallic. And some parts are organic, but mainly the upper half. After a few hours capturing strateigic posts, we've been attacked with a lance of Vultures and Uziel Mechs. They seemed to have excess weaponry and with a few well placed rockets, we were able to

Do a domino effect. The Terrans didn't realize that the explosion Mechs emit after taking too much punishment was deadly. The rest of the lance was scrap pile within thirty minutes. I can't help but feel that these Mechs aren't the worst of the Terran assault force. I think that something more powerful is coming our way real quick; something that'll be quick and unexpected.

\End Entry\

The initial move-up was easy. Only a few Terran Ghost snipers were nestled on the rooftops of the centermost buildings. They were easily picked off. The only downside was that when the Terrans ambushed the marines with stolen Mechs taken from the palace hangars. "That isn't good." Sally said. "If they have Mechs from the palace, then that means that they basically have control of the planet." "I've been in worse spots." Logan said. "Once were in an embargo between three planets, the king of the planets, sent a blockade to stop all material goods from entering the planet, including food and water, the UED however started to sneak provisions to the citizens. We eventually managed to keep the citizens alive long enough for the authorities to arrive and stop an illegal blockade, all that time we had to attack and defend." "This is nothing like that, Logan. This is my planet, the planet I'm going to rule one day. We have to save it. I'm not letting my family down. Nor anyone else for that matter." Chris nodded and cocked his rifle. "Amen to that, Princess. But now we face the bigger challenge: getting into the castle." Ryan tapped his rocket launcher, "I could blow a hole in it." Chris nodded. "You could, but it would attract attention. Too loud and too flashy." "Then what do you suggest?" Sally asked. Chris eyed Logan.

Logan donned a Terran power suit. It fit perfectly around his form. "OK, you just present ID to the scanner, and they'll let you in." Chris assured. "Sure, I'll let you know when I open the doors." Chris smiled. "Get moving Marine." Logan jogged off. At the palace gate a two man sentry stood guard. "Coming back from the city?" one on the left asked. "Yes, I am." Logan responded. "Kill any civilians?" the one on the right asked. "Sure. Loads of 'em" In his mind Logan thought, these guys are sick. "What was that?" the Terran on the right said. Uh oh, Terrans are Telepathic. "Well, you guys look sick, you know. Couple of sores. Better get them checked out." The Terran on the right looked at the Terran on the left. "You know, our shift is over in about ten minutes, how about we get those sores checked out then jet for a beer." The Terran on the left laughed heartily. "I'll take that drink." The two left. "Whew! That was close!" Logan said. He slid an ID card into the receptor. A light over the scanner pulsed green. He was in. "No way, No retinal scans, Voiceprint ID, not even tissue samples? These guys are getting rusty." With an easy shove, the doors slid open. He keyed in his COM. "Captain, the doors are open and the Terrans are gone, you can now move the Marines up."

Chris was waiting a couple blocks away hiding behind the wreckage of a Siege Tank. "Move up, boys. Stay quiet and move quickly." "That's what I'm trained for, Chris." Sally chimed. Bunnie slipped a clip of ammo into her arm cannon, quite an impressive feature. The receiver was adaptable to take any clip, even energy cells for laser weapons.

"OK, let's move up." The Marines made it a couple blocks. When the Terran patrol on the way to start their shift came, they opened fire at once. "Hey! Why isn't that guard shooting?" The Sergeant of the group said. "He's with them! It's an imposter!"

"Boy they were quick to come to that!" Chris said firing a burst into the Sergeant's armor. The bullets embedded, but not deep enough to cause tissue damage." "Get inside!" Chris ordered. A gauss round blew a soldier apart, spraying a parked car with blood. Sally screamed and ran for cover. She broke under pressure. Seeing a soldier torn apart qualified. A Desert Eagle round to the face managed to put the

Sergeant down for good. The other Terran seeing his superior die, opened fire on the retreating Marines. Machine gun fire killed a soldier and he slumped on the stairs that lead to the entry hall. Johnson fired a full clip at the Terran who killed the soldier. A bullet pinged off his combat armor. "Damn!" He cursed and closed the door.

Johnson slipped an empty battle rifle into the door handles. That'll keep 'em out. "It won't last, but it's worth a shot." Chris said. "OK, people, gimme a burial detail." Sally opened Nicole's cover. "Estimated 12 casualties when the Uziel and Vulture strike force attacked. All dead." Sally shuddered at the words. Disturbing since the men and women that dies were living mere hours before. "Two casualties on approach to the castle, both dead. Tingle here has a bullet in his kneecap, that'll mean limited mobility." She gestured to a brown haired human with a blood soaked face. "As for you, Chris, I'm only detecting mild adrenaline spikes and an increased heart rate. You'll be lucky to escape with bad dreams tonight." Chris smiled. "Thanks, Doc." Sally smiled back. Nicole responded. "I'm detecting large Terran Garrisons inside the castle. The centermost appears to be inside the throne room." "No." Sally said. "I'll patch you through a video. The screen flickered to life. The Terran Commander, Alexi Andrekov stood with a pistol in his hand, aimed at a king and queen. Sally gasped. "Mom, Dad!" Sally yelled but knew that the royals couldn't hear her. The camera was a one way feed. Andrekov cocked the pistol, but instead of firing it at the king and queen, he fired it at the camera. The display went all static and shut off. What went on after that wasn't shown or heard. Sally lunged at the antechamber doors that led to the throne room. Solid as a rock. It didn't budge. She tried hitting it, kicking it, and even shooting it. Nothing worked. Then she broke down. Her hair draped over her face, obscuring her features from the survivors. Chris went over. He set down his rifle. He got close to the princess and laid his hand on her shoulder. She stopped crying abruptly and looked up at him. "It's OK. They have to be alive. They have to be. And I'll make sure nobody harms them." Sally wiped her tears on her sleeve and stood up. "Promise?" Chris nodded "I promise."

Inside the throne room, Andrekov fired his pistol at the camera blowing it to pieces. The sparks tumbled to the floor followed by debris. "What is it you want, Terran?" King Max asked the Fleet Commander. "I want your planet, you deviant scum." "Deviant? We are our own species though technically human." The Terran angered and pointed the pistol at the queen's forehead, she shuddered. "I don't care what you are. I want this planet to conquer Earth. Then this galaxy and the next. I will rule the new Terran Galactic Empire. If you fail to comply with my wishes, I will decide not to take your life, but your wife's." He sent a round in the chamber. "Don't! Please!" Max shouted, shielding Alicia. "I thought you'd see it my way. We'll keep you here for a little while, and then I'll take control. Nobody's coming to help you."

But in truth, the rescuers were just one hundred feet away, but couldn't find a way through. Ryan cleaned his LMG. And put in a fresh belt of ammo. "Beautiful!" he said wiping a happy tear from his eye. Sally sat next to Ryan, he turned his neck so hard he cricked it. "How can you be so obsessed with guns?" She asked. "It's more complicated than it seems. I was born on Cambridge, a city planet in the Federated Suns space. It was a corrupted place. Everywhere you went you were in a slum, the rich dwelled above and the lower class



went to the streets. Typical hierarchy." Sally nodded. "Well said, go on." "When I was 12, my parent owed money to a crime lord, Feragon Davik. He's locked away now. Anyways, my parents owed him money bad. We just didn't have it. My dad always bet on the tracks, ball games, gambling, get rich quick schemes, all of it, but in the end, Davik killed them. I still have a picture." Sally then sensed a great remorse for Ryan. All this time and she never knew. In the picture, a man and a woman stood, then man had brown hair and the woman blond. Both had brown eyes. "Anyways, after they died, I earned money for doing jobs and tackling courier missions. I scraped enough for an economy ticket to Earth. When I got there, I was issued a pistol, being told that every household must have a firearm for security purposes. I kept it clean, working, and in top maintenance. I was never prepared for the first time I had to use it." Sally's eyes widened. Even Chris joined in. He took off his hat and leaned on the wall. "What happened?" He asked. Ryan breathed in and out. This story had an effect on him. "I was in Nicaragua. Just delivering a supplement of arms for a Private military group when a group of thugs attacked me. They fired a hail of rounds and one hit me in the stomach. It felt like someone heated a fire poker to white hot and stuck it in. Then, I pulled out my gun and shot the attacker in the head." Sally gasped. Chris shook his head, not looking at Ryan. "When the cops came, they told me that 'you did what you needed to.' So I wasn't tried, just sent to the hospital to get the bullet removed. Ever since then, that tiny pistol saved my life. I manufacture guns because I believed that someone, anyone who needed a means to defend him or her would come to me. That's how I made my living." Sally understood. Ryan was attached to guns because it saved his life, and because of his parents death. He wasn't mentally ill. Just caring, if not in a violent sort of way.

"Captain, we're in." Logan said. "I managed to run Nicole through a series of codes and electrical signatures, I managed to overload the wires keeping the motors shut and basically blew them up, the door will part when you pull it." Chris nodded. "Excellent work." Chris dug his gauntlets into the crack. Logan and Ryan pulled on the other side. The door creaked open. Sally and Johnson stood in the middle, guns raised. Bunnie held her arm aloft ready to fire. Andrekov dropped his pistol, surprised that the marines came in. "Knock Knock." Johnson said slipping a round into the chamber.

"How did you get in?" The Fleet Commander queried. "Computers do wonders." Sally said waving her personal computer. "No matter, I'm done here anyway." Andrekov picked up the crown. "I now control Mobius!" Too late, they lost.

Chris stepped up. "It's not over yet. We still have the guns to bring you down." Andrekov snapped his fingers. At once, a dozen Ghosts materialized around the throne room. All of their gauss cannons were pointed at the squad. "If you want the crown back, you'll have to pry it from my cold, dead hands!" King Max tossed a sword toward the marines. "Catch!" he yelled before Andrekov knocked him out. The sword clanged blade first and scrapped to Chris's feet. Chris picked it up and tossed it to Sally. She caught it in mid-air. "What's with the sword?" Johnson asked Ryan. "I dunno, Sarge." Ryan said aiming his sights. "Fire at will!" Andrekov screamed. "OUR PLEASURE!" the Ghosts said in unison. Time seemed to slow as the supersonic bolts left the barrels and spun towards the marines. Three were blown off their feet as the gauss rounds killed them, their bodies thumped on the wall and slid down, leaving bloody ribbons. The Marines fired

back. Bunnie launched a grenade which blew three Ghosts to smithereens. "Kill them all!" The crazed Fleet Commander ordered his troops, but they were being picked off as fast as he could order. Chris squeezed off bursts of his Assault Rifle each tracer round piercing the skin-tight armor.

Andrekov realized that his troops were dying. He pulled out his sword given to him when he graduated from Fleet Master Academy as a Fleet Commander. He raised his pistol and lunged forward, tempted to kill the Earthlings and the mutant animals. He gripped a Marine and held him high in the air, using his blade, he sliced the human's throat. Blood poured from the wound. The dying marine squirmed and struggled, then fell still. The supposed Commander with an olive drab fatigue hat screamed and fired three rounds. Andrekov blocked them all. That's when he raised his pistol and fired.

He had nowhere to go. Chris screamed as another marine was killed by Andrekov, the murderer. Only a few Ghosts were left but the survivors kept them occupied. Andrekov raised his pistol and fired. Chris went into the state known as Bullet Time taught by his \_sensei\_. He dodged the first two bullets but the third one hit. The Teflon coated slug entered his chest a mere centimeter above his heart. The effect was like having a knife coated in acid, frozen, and then stuck in your chest. Chris's mouth started to leak blood.

Someone screamed, but he wasn't sure who, he wasn't sure what anything was anymore.

He staggered. And fell. He heard a cruel laugh, a high, cold, cruel laugh. That's when his sight failed. Ironic. Christopher James Vennettilli, the Hero of Robotropolis, one of the youngest Captains in the millennium, was downed in a single gunshot. His breaths came short and his sight was lost. \_So this is how you die. I never thought it would end this way.\_

He felt something on him, but he wasn't sure what, he wasn't sure what anything was anymore. So, without hesitation, he closed his eyes, and took long, possibly final breaths.

## 18. Chapter 18 Flatline

### Chapter 17: Flatline

September 17th unknown 3235

Unknown

Christopher James Vennettilli didn't know where he was anymore. He had sight, but all there was to see on all sides was black. He felt like he was falling, but yet he was perfectly still "Where am I?" He asked to himself, aware that there was no-one there to hear his query. "You are at the Brink." A voice said. Chris gasped and reached for his gun, but it wasn't there, no holster, just combat armor. The figure that said these words was a being that floated, or it seemed considering the fact that there was no land visible beneath his feet. "What are you?" "I am the spirit of Death." Chris recoiled. "I'm dead?" He asked, looking alarmed. "Not yet you aren't, but as I said, you are at the Brink."

Chris considered this. "The Brink? You mean the Brink of Death?" The figure nodded. Its face shrouded in shadows produced by its hood. "Quite so." Chris was taking this all in. The spirit asked, "Do you remember what happened?" Chris racked his head, struggling to remember what the last few moments of consciousness were like. "I remember, I was shot, just over the heart." He felt his shirt where the bullet pierced absent-mindedly. His fingers found the wound. It was still slick with blood. "And after that?" the spirit inquired. "I remember something falling on me, cries, cries of sadness." The spirit of Death nodded. "Yes you did. Would you like to see what happened right after you were shot, Captain?" \_Captain?\_ Chris thought. Even when I'm an inch from death I am respected. In his mind, he wanted to say no, but his mouth said "Yes." The Spirit waved his hand and they were transported across space and time, right where he was only mere minutes ago.

There was nowhere to go. Chris could see himself backing against a wall, firing off desperate bursts trying to kill Andrekov. None hit, because the Terran deflected each and every one of them. "This is when it happened." Chris muttered. The pistol shot rang out. Three slugs sped towards him. He dodged the first two but the third impacted on his body. Chris felt the feeling again in his chest, the acid burning feeling. The past Chris staggered and fell, blood pouring from his mouth. And finally hit the ground, breathing short, rapid breaths. Then came the part he didn't know. It was Sally who screamed and ran over to his form. Ryan, Johnson and Logan took one long look at the Captain then redirected their sight to the Ghosts and mowed them down. Sally reached and picked up Chris's Desert Eagle in its holster. The present Chris felt it being yanked out, reliving the events. She pulled it up and aimed it at Andrekov's head. The Fleet Commander had time to utter a Russian curse before the princess loaded the entire clip into his head. She also took the sword and began hacking at the armor, its enchanted powers slicing through battle armor like a hot knife through butter. Sally didn't stop shooting or slashing until the rear of the high caliber pistol snapped back, revealing the empty chamber, not a bullet left in the clip. The corpse of Fleet Commander Andrekov staggered finally, his legs giving away, fell forward, a string of bullet holes in his face. His armor clunked as it hit the floor in pieces. The surviving Ghosts looked at their dead leader then dropped their guns. And put their hands on their heads. Johnson, Ryan and Logan went over and put handcuffs on them preventing their movement. "Let's hurry up and get to the Captain." Johnson told his comrades. Sally was kneeling beside Chris's bleeding body. "Come on, Chris. You can't die here. Not now. We came too far for that. I didn't go through all of that just so you can go. Please Chris, you have to hold on. I love you."

The present Chris froze. She said those words. The words he'd dreamt she'd say. I love you. "She said she loves me." He told the spirit. He said, "I know. I heard her the first time." The Marines gathered around Chris's body. "You were the greatest guy I ever knew. A Marine to the core." Johnson said, taking off his hat and smoothing his hair.

"We never knew each other long, Cap'n, but you sounded like a great guy." Logan said.

Ryan took out a hanky and blew. "You had the best gunshots I've ever seen!" he sniffed.

"Stay with us, Chris. Please." Sally pleaded. Then the breathing stood still. Sally's eyes filled with tears and she threw herself on his body. The resulting force knocked whatever wind was left inside Chris's lungs to be pushed out. The outside world changed to black again as they were before, just a void. "She said she loved me." Chris said again, this time his eyes filling with tears. I never imagined it would happen like that. I wanted to tell her myself. That I loved her." The spirit nodded. "Perhaps you can." He said. Chris's eyes snapped to the space where a face should be. "How?" He asked desperately. The spirit said "In this universe, there are good and bad people, people who want to save a life, or destroy it. You are one of these people, Christopher. You are a good person. I believe that good people deserve a second chance at life, no matter what the situation." Chris was overjoyed. "Thank you, thank you so much." He said. The spirit raised a hand. "Your journies are far from over in this life, Christopher James Vennettilli. You can expect great things from the future." That's all he said, the, disappeared.

There was silence for a few seconds until he heard a voice. "He's breathing!" and then "How? That bullet wound should've been fatal." Then, his eyes opened. At first, all he saw was white, then, as they focused, he saw blue eyes, beautiful sapphire blue eyes. Then it all came into focus. He saw Sally's face clearly, she couldn't be happier. "You're alive!" She exclaimed. Chris cringed with pain. "I know I am. Hurting, but I'm alive." Then without warning, Sally flung herself on top of Chris, wrapping her arms around his neck. "I always knew you'd pull through. You always do." Then, she kissed him. This wasn't like a kiss on the cheek to be friendly or grateful; this was a kiss firmly on the lips. Chris, who surprised by this, but didn't care, kissed back. Kissing Sally was different from kissing a human girl. Her lips felt soft with the fur covering them. She was warmer than a human girl, but it didn't matter. In Chris's mind, Sally was human. Johnson broke the silence. "No girlfriend, huh?" Chris smiled at the sergeant, "Getting shot can change a person." Sally put her head on Chris's shoulders. "I'm so happy you're OK. You probably didn't hear me say this, but I love you." Chris kissed her on the cheek. "I did, but not the way you'd expect." Ryan interrupted. "Sir, I'd hate to break up that little 'engagement' of yours, but Sally's parents are coming around. Sally was startled. "They are?" she lept up. A little embarrassed, she pulled up the right edge of her slightly sagging vest. It was one thing to kiss in public, but another to almost really get at it in the presence of three male Marines, not to mention her parents. "Mom, Dad, are you alright?" She helped her parents up. "I've been better, Sally." Max said to her. "Are you alright, Alicia?" The queen nodded, getting to her feet. "Sally, you're OK!" Sally hugged her parents, relieved that they were alive. Max took a quick look around. "We need to get these bodies out of here and get the surviving Terrans out of here. And what happened to Andrekov?" the king said pointing to the Fleet Commander's body. "Sally shot him. She unloaded fifteen of Chris's Desert Eagle shots into the Commander's brain." Bunnie said holding Chris's empty pistol. "And where is Christopher?" Alicia said looking around. "I haven't seen him since before Andrekov knocked us out." The Captain hobbled onto the main platform. "Here I am." Max noticed the bullet wound in Chris's chest. Who couldn't? "Are you alright, son?" the king inquired. "It got worse before it got better, much worse. I got a lucky break." Max stammered. "Y-you mean youâ€¦" Chris nodded.

"Closer than I'd ever like." His eyes widening at the fear of death.

"I don't know how or why, but I'm back." Max nodded, appreciation shining in his eyes. "You've done a great deal around here and no one else deserves a second chance more." Chris smiled, but then cringed from pain. "I'm still human though, and this still hurts." "I'm sure it does, we'll get you fixed up, lad." Chris slumped into one of the thrones and let the blood drip onto the rest of his uniform.

Max came up and sat next to him. "I just want to say one thing." Chris smiled. "Shoot." Chris groaned in his head. Bad gun pun. And even worse, a rhyme. "After you were shot, I seem to recall something happeningâ€¦" Chris stopped him. "You were awake?" the king shrugged. "Sure, I was awake just after he slammed me with his pistol." Chris nodded. "Continue, your Majesty." Max did. "As I recall after you were shot, Sally seemed to scream your name. I didn't look forward because I didn't want to get shot. I heard your personal weapon fire, and slashes. I knew it was over. So I looked and I see Sally draped over your body. You looked dead. I sure thought so. Even I shed a tear of remorse. But then, you woke up. Sally was overjoyed, and I witnessed the impossible, my daughter kissed a human: you." Chris felt his face redden as blood pumped. "You saw that?" he asked the king. He wasn't angry, in fact he was smiling. "I never saw my daughter that happy over anyone since Sonic." But that's when the bombshell struck: Sonic. How could this happen. It was all wrong. It was going to be bad. Sonic would find out and he could not be held responsible for what he was going to do with Chris. "This is bad." The king nodded slowly. "I agree. The truth is my daughter cares about Sonic. She trusts him with her life. But here's the thing: She loves you just as much, if not more." Chris started to sway uncomfortably. "What do I do?" he asked. All Max said was, "Just do what you think is right." Chris was confused. "What does that mean?" but the king wagged a finger at the wounded Marine. "I can't tell you. You'll need to find out for yourself. Now go get that bullet removed, you're bleeding over the floor." Chris realized he still was bleeding. He barely noticed. "Well, what do you know? I still am." Chris got up and walked slowly out. He turned back to Max one last time. "Sire?" The king nodded, "Thanks." Chris smiled. "I'm always here if you need me." As the Captain hobbled off to the infirmiry the king watched the young man go. He thought solomn thoughts about the human. "I wonderâ€¦ Can it be done? What am I saying? After witnessing what happened a few moments ago, I think anything may happen. I hope I'm alive the day I hope that, maybe, a human would be my son-in-law."

## 19. Chapter 19 Reclamation

### Chapter 18: Reclamation

September 19th 3235 1425 h

Medical Infirmiray, Castle Acorn, Mobius

Medical Log (Patient #1237)

\Begin Log\

Well, this is one of my stranger cases. Patient 1237, formally known a Captain Christopher James Vennettilli of the United Nations Space Command Defence Force (UNSCDF) has made a full recovery from his bullet wound after a delicate procedure of removing the bullet from

the cardiac cavity just a centimeter above the heart. Whatever the cause of death was either Cardiac Arrest or Severe Trauma. The cause of resuscitation however is completely unknown. Therefore it is classified as 'Paranormal Activity', a title that doesn't reach many of our Defibrillated patients. According to witnesses, the patient sustained one single gunshot wound, died for about five minutes and came back to life. Then the patient came by himself to the infirmary where he was given surgery as soon as possible but took a full day to recover from the surgery, which, as I said, he has completely rekindled from. All that needs to be done now is to discharge him.

Dr. Quack MD, Mobius Medical Confederation

\End Log\

Chris took the bandage off of his chest about seven hours after his discharge. He poked the replaced skin. All of it was flash-cloned skin, just about a few centimeters, so it didn't take long. Sally sat on a bed in Chris's apartment on Main Street. "You look good with your shirt off." She said. "A couple of days ago you wouldn't've said that." Chris said smiling at her. Sally smiled back. "A couple of days ago I didn't know that you had feelings for me. How's it looking?" "Good as new. Now, I'm still on medical leave for a couple of days so I might as well get comfortable." Chris sat on a couch in the next room and turned on his wall mounted TV. Sally sat down next to her new boyfriend. A woman with the face of a hedgehog with purple hair notified the general public that the Terrans have been pushed back to strategic positions around the planet including the ruins of Old Megaopolis, Mysterious Cat Country and the old site of the Floating Island. A square appeared and showed the Marines of the 182nd Battalion-Chris's unit-battle it out on the far corners of the planet. Chris sighed. "I should be out there with them, helping those people who are still trapped there." Sally stopped him there. "Are you crazy? You're still on leave. I bet that patch of cloned skin won't stand another shot like that, I can't stand to see you die again." Chris saw the worry sparkle in Sally's eyes. He put his arm around her shoulder. "Don't worry, I'll be here resting. I just hope that when I'm ready to go, you'll come with me." Sally smiled and hugged him. "Always will." She said, snuggling close to the human. The reporter finished her message. "We'll be back right after these commercials. "How about we watch a movie together?" Sally suggested. For once in his life, Chris could think of nothing better to do. Just as he was about to select a Pay per View off of local satellite, he received a video message on the tablet on the table. Chris picked it up. The message read '182nd' Chris smiled. The message was from the guys on the front. He pressed play and he saw two men standing in front of a HUMVEE.

"Is this thing on?" he heard an agitated voice, definitely Johnson. "Yeah, the light's on. We're live, Sarge." It was Ryan, his eyes obscured by the goggles of his GI helmet. Chris could tell because of the antique M249 SAW he carried. The other was Logan, newly fitted in a Marine GI costume. "Damn thing is too new; he had helmet recorders in my day." Johnson said lighting up and stepping in front of the jeep. Dust flying into the clear blue sky. They must be in Downunda. "Hey, Captain." Johnson said. "We have you, you got us?" Chris nodded. "Yeah, I do, Johnson. How are things on the front?" "Things aren't the same without you sir." Ryan said shaking his head lightly. "And he says that like he means it, Sir. The boy has no cue cards

around." "That's right, Chris. 100 from the heart. How much longer on your leave?" Chris checked his planner on another screen. "About two more days left. Then we go to Earth." Logan nodded "Earth, I'd like to see it, I learned from the history vids that Earth was beautiful. "And it still is." Chris assured Logan. "It's a modern ecumenopolis." Johnson said. "Well, Captain Sherman says that we better move our asses. Sorry to leave you hanging." Chris shrugged his shoulders. "Not at all. Tell the others that I can't wait to get back." He said smiling. "OK, I see your girlfriend is watching." The Sergeant said. "Miss you alot, boys." Sally said waving to the Marines. "See you when we get back. Hope you get better" Ryan said, and then the screen snapped off with the total message time remaining. "I hope those boys really slug it to them." Sally nodded. "You and me both." Then, she leaned on Chris, handing him the remote. "Now, are we gonna watch that movie or not?" she smiled and Chris relaxed. It was the first time in months. And for some reason, he wondered if Sonic was alright. But Sonic was all the way on Earth. And he couldn't help but think that after his vacation was done, something inside him said that there was great danger ahead of him. Sally sensed this. "Don't worry about what's going to happen after this or Sonic for that matter. I know him, and if he's the hedgehog he is, he'll make it back, for all of us. And as for the Terrans, they'll have to face the dynamic duo of Chris and Sally!" She said layering her voice with announcer quality. "The guys are coming with us too." Chris said. "Yes, let's not forget company." She turned his face to meet hers. "Just relax. After these two great days are up, then we'll focus on saving the galaxy." She kissed him and he held her close as the opening credits of the movie started to roll: A movie about a knight, and a princess saving their kingdom from a dark lord's power. "Where does that look familiar?" Chris asked Sally, running his fingers through her red hair. She curled up at his touch. "I'm not sure." Sally said smiling. "Must be something you might read in a book, or on the Internet."

Andsworth was in space on the bridge of the Indomitable. The supercarrier had taken a beating the day before: Four hull breaches, two on the engine deck and two in the vehicle bay. Most of the 'Mechs in the bay were frozen shut and it would take hours to thaw them out. Over two hundred casualties: most of them being fighter personnel and point defense operators. The command decks weren't touched. In turn, with the help of the Indomitable and the Immaculate-a Mobian cruiser-and her fleet, the UNSC helped ward off the Terran attack force. Andsworth had sent orders for Chris's leave last night at 0000 hours when he learned that the young Captain had died and then came back to life and was convinced with a medical document outlining the events. "I always knew that boy was full of surprises but this is way too much. I think its time for the kid to take a break." He had said to Velo since he would listen. Lieutenant Jack Velo would respond in a slow nod agreeing and returning to his communication console. "Maple, how's our ammo supplies?" Feedin checked the inventory. "We have about 1200 Archer missiles left and plenty of MAC slugs. And as for vehicles, all 'Mechs are accounted for and we lost two tanks through the hull breach and six Warthogs before the magnetic locks on the wheels tightened. As for everything else, full inventory." Andsworth nodded. "Anything on scanners?" Velo checked the scanners. "You aren't going to believe this, sir, but there's a ship in orbit. "What kind of ship?" Jack ran the shilloiette through the files. "Not UNSC, Terran, Robot, or Covenant." That could only mean one thing. "Scanning the ship image." Velo said taking a picture of the ship's port side. A picture of a

fish shaped ship appeared. "Blow up that section, please." Andsworth ordered. "Blowing up to 1000x." A picture of a face appeared, slightly skeletal, two eyes and a smile that took up about half of the image too. But the clicker was the fact that there was a moustache on the figure. "Oh no." Andsworth moaned. "Say it ain't so!" Velo said. This attracted attention from the rest of the bridge. "It's Eggman. He's back at Earth. Can you get a fix on where he is?" Velo nodded. "Of course I can." After his 100 wpm typing finished, he declared: "The kingdom and nation of Soleana. A population of 10 million that's headed by her Royal highness princess Elise. Her father died recently and left the crown to her, she is to be crowned soon." Andsworth sat in the command chair. "Well, that's it, we found him. Eggman's shown himself." Velo put his mike to his mouth. "Need me to contact an agent planetside?" Feedin interrupted. "Sir, with all do respect, why don't we just overtake the ship ourselves?" Andsworth answered that "Because that ship has laser weapons, we already took enough of a beating yesterday and the hull breaches will reveal big targets."

"I think I know the perfect man for this job. Velo, open a channel in New Mombasa, Kenya. "Opening. Scanning for UNSC transponders. Got one: at the base of the Orbital Elevator at the center of the city." The man that Andsworth was looking for wasn't really a man at all. Hopefully he would respond and save the world.

## 20. Chapter 20 Epilouge

### Epilouge

September 19th 3235 2134 h

New Mombasa, Kenya

Sonic the hedgehog stirred as the communicator beeped on the ruined Hev Hawk. Ever since the battle yesterday, they were heading south in terms of morale. Almost all of their ammunition had been consumed and rations would last only for so much longer. Yesterday, the Terrans had brought things with them. What they were was a mystery, a cross between a snake and an undead zombie, with schythes for hands. Tails fried one with his StunGun and Sonic mowed down any Terrans with the SMG as crappy as it was, he had thousands of bullets at the time. So they all went nice and painfully, and now THIS. The communicator beeped louder. A voice appeared. "This is Admiral Andsworth. Sonic, Tails are you there?" Sonic dismissed the voice with his hand. "Go away, its 9:34 at night. "Private First Class Olgilvie Maurice Hedgehog, you answer this comm right now or I'll send an orbital strike on your position on 'accident'." Those were the magic words. He used Sonic's real name. "That does it." He said snapping the communicator on. "Let's get one thing straight, my name's Sonic. Sonic the hedgehog." The voice got mad. "Do you know who you're talking to?" "Oops" Sonic said aloud. "Sorry about that sir. I thought that it was that spunky Lieutenant." Then a second voice said, "I'm not deaf Hedgehog." "How you doing Velo?" Sonic said casually. "Never mind, Eggman is here on Earth. In a little kingdom of Soleana in Europe, I'll send you the location." Sonic swore. "I knew he was going to show his face." "Us to, but we never expected it here and now. The fat bastard caught us at our weakest point." Sonic nodded. "So what do you want me to do?" Andsworth said, "We need you to stop him." Sonic glanced at the sleeping fox. "What about Tails?"



Andsworth said, "Wake him, tell him and we'll get dustoff. Clear?"  
Sonic nodded. "Crystal. Sonic out."

Tails woke to Sonic's touch on his shoulder. "Little bro?" he asked. "Yeah, Sonic?" Tails said yawning wide. "I need to go on a mission." Tails awoke abruptly. "OK, I'll grab my stuff." Sonic sidestepped instantly and blocked Tails path. "Whoa," he said raising his palms. "I need to go on this one alone." Tails' ears drooped. "Why?" Sonic explained. "Eggman's on Earth. He's in a kingdom that needs my help. I do need you to do one thing." Tails was all ears. "What?" Sonic sighed. "I need you to stay out of sight inside the Hev Hawk. Hide in the cockpit, engines, missile tubes, I don't care. But I need you to stay out of sight until the Pelican comes for you. When it comes, I want you to get onboard and meet everyone else on the Indomitable. You'll get orders later." Tails nodded. The last thing he wanted was to wait alone in a crashed plane with Terrans and xenomorphs running around, but the Pelicans were coming. And he agreed. "You'll be OK, Tails." Sonic said. "You're a survivor, and they survive. I'll see you spaceside." Then in a flash, Sonic disappeared. A pistol clattered to the ground. The shaking Tails picked it up and cocked it, climbed into the cockpit and waited; he sat scared, and stiff. He was alone, but, he had faith. He had faith that his friends were coming. He would be safe, and they would save the world again or die trying. He turned on the radio. The box in the dashboard sputtered ancient music. Tails could've sworn he heard something that sounded like "We Can" which mentioned his name in it. Tails decided that he should get some sleep. Might as well get on the dropship after covering 40 winks. He closed his eyes slowly and he went to sleep. His head cushioned on the headdress. And he felt in his last moments of consciousness that there Terrans and their pets were going to be much, much more than they would appear to be and that there would be great fighting and death at the end of this. But all of this was drowned by dreams of peace, love, and friendship. His head slumped, stopped when it hit the side metal side of the cockpit. Then he was fast asleep.

In space parsecs away, The Terrans, learning about their leader's loss, decide to unleash their pets on humanity. These xenomorphs would be unstoppable, flesh seeking, ravenous, and presistant. These hell bent creatures were the Zerg.

\End Transmission\

End  
file.